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ALCUIN:
HIS LIFE AND HIS WORK

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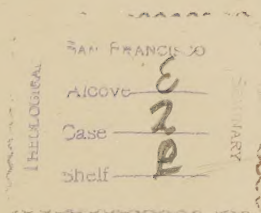
ALCUIN:

HIS LIFE AND HIS WORK

BY

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PREFACE.

THE following pages—in a somewhat different form —first saw the light as the Essay to which the Hulsean Prize for 1899 was awarded.

In Chapters I—IV a brief account of the early history of letters in Alcuin's native land serves to show how peculiarly he was fitted by the circumstances of his birth and training to undertake the various tasks which were successively imposed upon him.

In Chapters V—VIII an attempt is made to give a chronological history of his career—an attempt rendered somewhat difficult by the fact that of the three hundred and odd letters on which the biographer has chiefly to rely very few indeed can be precisely dated.

In Chapters VIII—X his achievements are summarised under three main heads: theological, educational, liturgical and biblical. In the first and still more in the third of these chapters I have walked, with the unaccustomed step of the layman, in paths where even the specialist may reasonably fear to fall; and here I have been necessarily more dependent than usual on the guidance of expert authorities. Wherever independence of judgment would not savour

merely of ignorant presumption, however, I have endeavoured to maintain it: at least I have not consciously embodied in my work the untested conclusions of others in any case where I have believed myself at all competent to test them.

Nevertheless I have tried to avail myself as far as possible of all the most recent literature on the subject; and the list of authorities cited in the notes indicates to some extent the greatness of my obligations to earlier writers.

Like all students of Alcuin's life I owe more than I can easily express to the labours of Jaffé and Duemmler, and where I have ventured to differ from either or both of these great authorities I have done so with much misgiving, and an uncomfortable consciousness that the grounds on which many of their *obiter dicta* are based may be none the less conclusive because they thought it unnecessary to state them.

But I owe scarcely less to the *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands* of Dr Albert Hauck, while among many other useful works Mr Mullinger's *Schools of Charles the Great* must be mentioned as having been of special value to me.

I have further to acknowledge, with the warmest gratitude, much information, criticism, and advice from the Regius Professor of Divinity (Dr Swete); the Master of Pembroke (Dr Mason); the late C. J. Bates, M.A., of Jesus College; F. C. Burkitt, M.A., of Trinity College; the Rev. W. H. Frere, M.A., Master of the Community of the Resurrection at Mirfield, Yorks.; M. R. James, Litt.D., Fellow of King's College; Dom Germanus Morin, O.S.B., of the Abbey of Maredsons;

and J. Bass Mullinger, M.A., Fellow and Librarian of St John's College.

The Public Orator (Dr Sandys) has generously devoted much time and trouble to a detailed criticism of many chapters in my essay.

My debt to Canon Foakes Jackson, B.D., Fellow and Dean of Jesus College, who has read the book more than once both in MS. and in print, and in other ways has given me constant help and encouragement, is one that cannot be adequately expressed.

To all those who have thus helped me I tender my heartiest thanks; to them much of whatever is good in my work is due, while none but I myself can be charged with its shortcomings.

I cannot end without some grateful acknowledgment, however insufficient, of the unwearied and devoted help which I have received throughout both from my elder sister and—in this as in everything else—from my Mother.

C. J. B. G.

27 *January*, 1904.

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p. 144 n. 2, l. 3 *for* Augustus *read* Augustine.
p. 152 l. 8 *for* Itherius *read* Heterius.
p. 180 l. 3 *for* Dungal *read* Dungall.

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¹ The seventh edition of the first volume, dated Berlin, 1904, (of which pp. 1—368—including the accounts of Charles the Great, pp. 167—177, and Alcuin, pp. 186—190—received their final revision from E. Duemmler) did not reach Cambridge till most of this essay was in type.

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CHAPTER I.

THE SCHOOLS OF WALES AND IRELAND.

THE Anglo-Saxon invasion of the fifth century meant destruction to religious and intellectual life throughout the greater part of Britain. The little that survived found refuge in the wild fastnesses of the west, where the fugitives cherished for their enemies an implacable hatred, none the less bitter because they recognised in their calamities the merited chastisement of their own misdeeds. In the pages of Gildas, for the moment the only articulate voice of his people, unsparing denunciations of the national sins are mingled with cries of a greedily anticipated vengeance on the national foes.

For the conversion of their conquerors to Christianity, therefore, the Britons had but little inclination. Not on both sides of the grave, at all events, should their thirst for vengeance go unslaked! In the days of Augustine, and even of Aldhelm, the passionate hatred of Briton for Anglo-Saxon was burning still, and prevented entirely any effectual cooperation between the British Church and the Roman mission in the spread of Christian faith or Christian learning.

Of the standard of learning among the Britons in this period no detailed account can be given. But—apart from the acquaintance with the Vulgate displayed by the ‘Britanniarum Episcopus’ Fastidius, who wrote about 430 A.D.¹, and still more, in the following century, by Gildas—there are strong reasons for believing that the British Church was not cut off from the intellectual life, such as it was, on the Continent, where, especially in the friendly land of Brittany, many fugitives from the Anglo-Saxon sword found a refuge and a home. And in the sixth century the great monastic schools of Wales, at Bangor and St Asaph, at Llantwit Major and Llanbadarn, undoubtedly achieved a noble reputation. The ‘Bangor’ or ‘high choir’ at Iscoed in south-east Flintshire was said to number as many as two thousand monks at the time of its destruction², and in the days of Cadoc Llancarvan was crowded with Irish students.

It was from these cressets of the British Church indeed that the light of learning first streamed steadily across the sea to Ireland, whatever fitful flickerings may have hitherto lighted up her darkness. For the story that each of St Patrick’s priests was furnished with a catechism, a mass-book, a ritual, and a Psalter, and occasionally with a copy of the Gospels also³, even if it is accepted as true, says little for their learning or their culture. Nor is the tradition which attributes to the saint himself the foundation of the school at Armagh, the first Christian school in

¹ Haddan and Stubbs, *Councils*, i. 16. Cf. Berger, *Histoire de la Vulgate*, 34.

² Bright, *Early English Church History*, 33.

³ Healy, *Insula Sanctorum*, 64.

Ireland, and afterwards one of the most famous in the world¹, of any greater value. The real work of St Patrick was to convert the heathen: not to establish, still less to direct, schools or colleges. The 'First Order of Saints²,' indeed, as a whole, can claim little credit for the learning of the Irish Church. Those "sons of reading" of after years, whose patron was St Brigit, the namesake and successor of the old pagan goddess of the poets³, were taught by the saints of the Second Order, and their inspiration came for the most part from the British schools.

Towards the end of the fifth century, it is said, Enda, a son of the Irish king of Oriel, crossed the seas to Britain in the pursuit of learning, and remained for some time either at St Ninian's monastery of Whitherne (Candida Casa), in Galloway, or at the Welsh monastery of Rosina. On his return to Ireland (c. 483) he founded the monastic school of Aran Mór, to which most of the saints of the Second Order resorted to spend the novitiate, as it were, of the religious life⁴. Thither came Brendan the Voyager and the two Finnians, Ciaran, the founder of Clonmacnois, and Carthach the Elder of Lismore, Jarlath of Tuam, Keevin of Glendalough, and last, though far from least, Columcille himself.

One of these scholars, Finnian of Clonard, did more than any other man to spread the learning and the

¹ Hyde, *Literary History of Ireland*, 134.

² *Ib.* 192 seq. 'The First Order was composed of Patrick and his associates, and is reckoned by the Irish to have lasted during four reigns. The next Order,...to which Columcille belonged,...also lasted for four reigns, or, roughly speaking, during the last three-quarters of the sixth century.... After these came the Third Order, who...are said...to have lasted down to the time of the great plague in 664.'

³ *Ib.* 161-2.

⁴ *Ib.* 195.

customs of the British Church in his own country. Trained in the same schools as the great Welsh scholars Gildas and David, he had been a student at the famous monastery of Menevia, and at Llancarvan, near Cowbridge, had joined the troops of Irish pupils who attended Cadoc's lectures. He and his comrades of the Second Order are said to have transplanted to Ireland both the liturgy and the monastic rule of the British Church in Wales¹. It was about 520 that, as the hymn of his office puts it,

Reversus in Clonardiam,

Ad cathedram lecturae,

Apponit diligentiam

Ad studium scripturae.

Trium virorum milium

Sorte fit doctor humilis;

Verbi his fudit fluvium,

Ut fons emanans rivulis;

and at Clonard 'the Twelve Apostles of Ireland' all in turn sat at his feet.

But Clonard was only one of many schools which thus owed their existence to the zeal of the Second Order. About 544 Ciaran, 'the son of the carpenter,' one of Finnian's own pupils, founded at Clonmacnois a school which, owing largely to its central situation, almost in the middle of the island, became a meeting-place of races, where teachers and students alike came from all quarters, and churches and round towers and burial-places bore the names of kings and chiefs from all the country round². A school at Clonfert, again,

¹ Hyde, *op. cit.*, 198. Cf. Fowler, *Adamnani Vita S. Columbae*, 3.

² Hyde, *op. cit.*, 204.

was established in 556 or thereabouts by another of Finnian's pupils, Brendan the Voyager, and, like Clonard itself, was accredited in the Irish records with a body of three thousand scholars¹. Simultaneously there arose at Bangor on Belfast Lough the greatest school (except Armagh) of northern Ireland. Its founder was Comgall, and many of its distinguished members—St Columban, for example, and Dungall, and St Gall—won renown for Irish piety and learning on the Continent². And there were others of almost equal reputation at Moville and Iniscaltra, at Lismore and at Cork.

It was from St Finnian of Moville as well as from his namesake of Clonard, Mobhí of Glasnevin, and other scholars, that Columcille or Columba received instruction in his youth³. At the age of twenty-five he established his first monastery in the Isle of Derry. Seventeen years later, when the famous schools of Meath and Durrow had risen beneath his hand, he crossed the sea to the island of Hy or Iona, off the Scottish coast. His reason for this proceeding is unknown. The story of St Finnian's Psalter, and of the quaint judgment of King Diarmuid ('to every book belongs its son book, as to every cow her calf'), has been dismissed to the realm of fable as 'a post-Adamnanic legend⁴,' and if missionary zeal was not Columcille's guiding motive the cause of his migration must probably be sought in one of the ceaseless tribal wars which distracted Ireland

¹ Hyde, *op. cit.*, 198.

² *Ib.*, 207. It is said to have been greatly influenced through Finnian of Moville by Gildas and the saints of Wales. Cf. Willis Bund, *The Celtic Church of Wales*, 174.

³ He was born on the 7th of December, 521, 'of the highest and bluest blood of the Irish race,' Hyde, *op. cit.*, 166.

⁴ Fowler, *op. cit.*, liii.

in his day. But, however this may be, the monastery which he and his twelve companions founded in Iona became the basis of Irish missionary operations in Northern Britain, which led to the conversion in his own lifetime of the Albanian Picts and in later years of the Northumbrian Angles. For from the foundation of Columcille, the pupil of that Finnian of Clonard who in his turn had learnt of the saints of Wales, came Aidan and the Celtic missionaries of Northumbria. Thus it was that in the north the learning and the Christianity of Irish monasteries gained a footing upon English soil.

The fact was one of great significance, for the Irish monks had embraced both learning and religion with all the ardour of their Celtic temperament. Their monasteries were veritable hives of industry, whose inmates pursued their studies for their own sakes, and 'needed no prizes or scholarships to stimulate their energy, holding rather that learning was its own reward¹. Theology, needless to say, held the first place in their curriculum: the study of the Scriptures was the chief duty, as it was the chief delight, of the scholars. For the elucidation of the sacred writings Jerome was their great authority, while on points of doctrine their appeal was usually to the Fathers of the Gallican Church, such as Hilary of Arles², though in such matters they were also much addicted, at least in later years, as Benedict of Aniane complained, to the use of dialectics,—*sylogismus illusionis, maxime apud Scottos*.

¹ G. T. Stokes, *Ireland and the Celtic Church*, 229. Cf. Poole, *Illustrations of Medieval Thought*, 9 seqq.

² Healy, *op. cit.*, 99. He adds that the Augustinian writings on 'grace' were not at first familiar to them.

But other studies shared their attention: grammar and arithmetic; chronology; astronomy, and other branches of natural science; while they were famous also for their love of poetry, Irish as well as Latin¹. In the liberal arts their text-book was the *De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* of Martianus Capella, that dangerous work (in Roman eyes) which furnished Virgil of Salzburg with his unorthodox doctrine as to the Antipodes². The best Latin authors, classical as well as patristic, were widely read: Adamnan, for example, showed familiarity with both, and his own Latin style, if scarcely Ciceronian, was a favourable specimen of its kind³.

The composition of verses, again, both Latin and Irish, was a favourite exercise, and the poetical acrostics of Englishmen like Aldhelm and Alcuin find a parallel in the lines addressed by Joseph the Scot to Charles the Great.

But the special distinction of the Irish scholars was their knowledge of Greek. By their classical attainments, and especially by their knowledge of Greek, it has been justly remarked, the culture of the men of those ages may be rightly gauged⁴, and judged by this standard the Irish scholars rank extremely high.

¹ Columcille is said to have preserved the lives of Irish bards when they were menaced, and not a few poems still extant are attributed to his own pen, though on evidence, it must be confessed, by no means convincing.

² The book was a great favourite in the schools of Gaul. Cf. Mullinger, *The Schools of Charles the Great*, 64, and also his article on *Schools* in *Dict. Christian Antiq.*

³ But the Irish did not escape the pedantic influence of Toulouse: 'they seem to have found something unspeakably attractive in the bizarre language of the Twelve Latinities' (Drane, *Christian Schools*, 54), and it left its traces in many of their writings.

⁴ Zimmer, *Ueber die Bedeutung des irischen Elements für die*

If Adamnan's acquaintance with Greek and Hebrew was but slight¹, with others the case was very different, as is shown by the writings of Cumman², Augustine (an unknown monk who quoted Eusebius in the latter half of the seventh century), the great missionary Columban, the learned Virgil, Bishop of Salzburg, and the theologian Sedulius, who 'carried on the Greek tradition to the days of John the Scot³'; while Irish glosses and notes on Greek MSS. of the New Testament written in the eighth and ninth centuries confirm their testimony⁴. There is indeed some absurdity in the assertion of Darmesteter that 'the classic tradition, to all appearance dead in Europe, burst out into fresh flower in the Isle of Saints, and the Renaissance began in Ireland seven hundred years before it was known in Italy⁵.' Yet the state of classical culture in Ireland

mittelalterliche Cultur. Translated by J. L. Edmonds, and published in book form, under the title, *The Irish Element in Mediæval Culture.*

¹ Fowler, *op. cit.*, liii.

² Died c. 664.

³ Cf. Traube, *Sedulius Scottus.*

⁴ For a fuller discussion of Greek learning in Ireland, and of the evidence for the continuous communication between Gaul and Ireland to which it is attributed, cf. G. T. Stokes, *The Knowledge of Greek in Ireland*, and Hyde, *op. cit.*, *passim*. The Britons of Wales also maintained some communication with the Continent, and Brendan of Clonfert, visiting Gildas in the sixth century, is said to have found him possessed of a missal written in Greek characters. (Stokes, *op. cit.*, 193.) A Latin MS. in Greek characters is doubtless a much less satisfactory proof of Greek scholarship than even a Greek MS. in Latin characters, but the legend has its weight, and it seems not impossible that the saints of the Second Order may have learnt something of the Greek tongue, if scarcely of Greek literature, from their British teachers, the knowledge thus gained being subsequently widened and deepened by intercourse with Gaul. The British was a younger sister of the Gallican Church, and the learned as well as the liturgical traditions of Gaul may have found their way into Ireland indirectly through Britain not less than directly over sea; it is thus at least that the difference between the Mass (or one of the Masses) of the Second Order and the 'Mass of St Patrick' is explained.

⁵ *English Studies*, 202.

certainly presented a striking contrast to its contemporaneous condition on the Continent¹.

Nor was the art of writing, all important to the cause of scholarship, neglected. Every monastery had its *scriptorium*, and of Columcille it is reported that he wrote 'three hundred gifted, lasting, illuminated, noble books.' The death of a scribe was deemed worthy to be mentioned by the annalists, and the Books of Durrow and of Kells still bear witness to the skill of Irish penmen in the seventh and eighth centuries.

Thus, while learning was almost extinct upon the Continent, its life in Ireland was keen and vigorous. And learners from abroad were there received with open arms. The biographer of St Senan tells of seven vessels, all full of students bound for the school of Iniscaltra, dropping anchor at once at the mouth of the Shannon², and Angus the Culdee of Gauls and Saxons, Britons, Romans, Latins, and even seven Egyptian monks, all sailing for the Irish shores³. And, if little importance can be attached to the assertion of a modern writer that 'before Augustine's coming Anglo-Saxons eager to learn were sent almost exclusively to the Hiberno-Scottish Churches⁴,' this was almost exactly the case, as Bede relates, after the conversion of Northumbria. 'There were at that time in Ireland,' he

¹ The treatise of Aileran (d. 664) on the genealogy of Christ, 'the sole literary survival of the School of Clonard' (Bright, *op. cit.*, 184; Hyde, *op. cit.*, 197), and the Psalter of Camin of Iniscaltra (d. 653, Bright, 184; Hyde, 213) show also something more than a merely superficial acquaintance with Hebrew.

² Hyde, *op. cit.*, 213.

³ Stokes, *op. cit.*, 192.

⁴ Denk, *Geschichte des Gallo-Fränkischen Unterrichtswesens*, 253. He cites as his authority Werner, *Beda der Ehrwürdige*, 70, which however scarcely bears out the assertion.

writes, in his account of the holy brethren Egbert and Æthelhune, 'many English nobles and men of lower rank who in the days of the Bishops Finnian and Colman, forsaking their native island, had retired thither for the sake either of pursuing the divine studies, or of leading a life of greater continence. Some presently faithfully embraced the monastic life, but others chose rather to devote themselves to study, passing from one master's cell to another. And all were willingly received by the Scots, whose care provided them with daily bread, and books to read, and the teaching of their masters, without cost¹.' 'A third part of the sacred city of Armagh was known as the Saxon quarter²,' and Aldhelm complained that even in his day troops of English students were carried in fleets to Ireland, flocking to the Irish schools 'like bees gathering honey,' though the School of Canterbury had then arisen, and to his mind was offering yet greater advantages to scholars.

Agilbert, the Frankish Bishop of Dorchester; Dago-bert, the Frankish King; Aldfrith, King of Northumberland; Chad, Bishop of Lichfield; Æthelhune, Bishop of Sidnacester; Willibrord, the Apostle of the Frisians; Egbert, the successful champion in Iona of the paschal cycle of Rome—these are but a few of the foreign students innumerable who received instruction in the Irish schools.

But it needed not the offices of foreigners to noise abroad the fame of Irish letters, sacred and profane. Irishmen themselves proved the most indefatigable missionaries that the world had ever known. They

¹ *Historia Ecclesiastica*, iii. 27.

² Bright, *op. cit.*, 212.

spread the Gospel far and wide—Columcille among the Picts and Scots, Aidan in Northumbria, Columban in Burgundy, St Gall in Switzerland and Alemannia, Kilian and Virgil in Thuringia and Carinthia. Sometimes it was new ground that they broke, sometimes (as here and there in England) they were to be found ‘effectively renewing abortive attempts¹’ of earlier labourers. And almost everywhere, as for example at Luxeuil and Bobbio and St Gall, their progress was recorded in the rise of schools.

‘First by armies of missionaries, and then by learned teachers—first by attracting pupils to Irish schools from all Christian Europe north of the Alps and the Pyrenees, and next by sending men forth to become the founders of schools, or monasteries, or Churches abroad;’ the Scottish Churches ‘stand out, from the sixth century forward, as the most energetic centres of religious life and knowledge in Europe—the main restorers of Christianity in paganized England and Roman Germany—the reformers and main founders of monastic life in northern France—the leading preservers, in the eighth and ninth centuries, (though under strange guise) of theological and classical culture, Greek as well as Latin—the scribes, both at home and abroad, of many a precious Bible text—the teachers of psalmody—the schoolmasters of the great monastic schools—the parents, in great part, as well as the forerunners, of Anglo-Saxon learning and missionary zeal².’

¹ Haddan, *Remains*, 266.

² *Ib.*, 260. Miss Margaret Stokes’ *Six Months in the Apennines and Three Months in the Forests of France* contain a mass of information as to the doings of Irishmen abroad in the early Middle Ages.

CHAPTER II.

THE SCHOOL OF CANTERBURY.

Theodore and Hadrian.

IN the view of the writer whose words closed the last chapter the work of the Irish missionaries was essentially preparatory. They were voices crying in the wilderness, pioneers rather than builders, clearing the ground, making straight the highway, doing a work the value of which it would be hard indeed to over-estimate, but leaving the task of mastering heathenism among alien races and founding permanent Churches to their Anglo-Saxon or Frankish successors,—‘men who were less of hermits and more of monks, who had adopted a rule of life less exactly ascetic, and who handled their converts not with greater zeal or affectionateness, but with a greater power of practical organisation, and a more judicious estimate of human nature¹.’

It was conspicuously so in the history of the English Church, both at home and abroad. The seed sown by Columcille and Aidan, by Columban and St Gall, was watered and tended and brought to perfection by Cuthbert and Chad, Wilfrid and Benedict Biscop, by Aldhelm, Bede, and Egbert, by Willibrord and Boniface, by Lul and Alcuin.

¹ Haddan, *op. cit.*, 265.

The debt which England owed to the faith, the love, the enthusiasm of her Irish evangelists can scarcely be over-estimated, but the loose monastic organisation of the Church they represented, reproducing or even exaggerating the defects which in the secular sphere characterised the Celtic tribal polity, could never have sufficed for her needs. 'A series of Christian camps'¹—it is thus that the agglomeration of monasteries which composed the Irish communion has been described¹—may have been an admirable machinery for missionary enterprise in a pagan land, but in a country wholly Christian it was only an inadequate anomaly. The diocesan system, on the other hand, which, modelled on the organisation of the later Roman Empire, prevailed elsewhere in Western Europe, showed in its dignified and symmetrical unity a superiority to the native secular polities of Celt or Teuton which the Irish method could never boast. And the diocesan system was the gift of the Latin mission, first of Augustine and then of Theodore, with its insistence on unity and uniformity, on the recognition of the primacy of Canterbury, and on the acceptance of the Roman tonsure and the Roman Easter, if not also of the Roman mass-book and the Roman chant. Thus it was that Northumbrians, Mercians, and West Saxons,—and Britons too,—acknowledged in the Primate of Canterbury their common spiritual head long before they recognised the West Saxon King at Winchester as the 'hlaford and mund-bora' of all alike. On the other hand, if the rule of Rome, for which English Churchmen conceived an

¹ G. F. Browne, *The Christian Church in these Islands before Augustine*, 124.

affection 'the more strong because it was scarcely ever tested,'—a reverence 'romantic, childlike, and happily ignorant of much which would have tried it¹,'—tended in reality 'to foster superstition and spiritual despotism²,' and to sacrifice spontaneity to uniformity, the abiding influence of the Celtic mission, which could scarcely be analysed but might yet be felt, minimised the danger. For, though Colman and his Irish followers left the country after the Synod of Whitby, most of their English disciples accepted its decision and remained behind, and thus the Irish passion for asceticism and missionary enterprise was harmonised with the dignity and order of Rome, and happily tempered in many cases by the sobriety and saving sense of the Anglo-Saxon character; while, though the loyalty of the national Church to the Apostolic See was undoubted, the double tradition, Celtic and Roman, the tradition of Lindisfarne and the tradition of Canterbury, was long discernible in her usages and in her service books.

In like manner the learning of the Anglo-Saxons was derived from a twofold source, Irish as well as continental. In Northumbria in the days of Aidan, according to Bede, English children were taught by Irish preceptors the elements of learning, together with the more advanced studies and the observance of discipline³. It is indeed true that the early Northumbrian monasteries were at first essentially evangelistic centres⁴, aiming primarily at the conversion of the English, and regarding learning rather as a means to that end than as

¹ Trench, *Medieval Church History*, 40.

² Bright, *op. cit.*, 233.

³ *Hist. Eccles.* iii. 3.

⁴ Savage, *Northumbria in the 8th Century*, 264.

an end in itself; though here and there perhaps some Irish scholar taught with other aims, as Maidulf was teaching the West Saxons at Malmesbury on the eve of Theodore's mission. Nor does it seem safe to assert that either in the seventh or in the eighth century Northumbria was 'covered with Irish schools'.¹ But both Aldhelm and Bede dwell on the attraction which the monastic schools of Ireland possessed for English students, and their writings leave no doubt that in this way Irish learning must have obtained much influence in England². In the early history of the Roman mission, on the other hand, letters played an insignificant part. Rome itself was not remarkable for learning in the days of Gregory the Great, though too much stress has doubtless been laid on his famous rebuke to Desiderius of Vienne for teaching grammar in his cathedral church. If Augustine established a school, nothing is known of it³, and the catalogues which purport to enumerate the books he brought to Canterbury, even if they are accepted as trustworthy, represent a library scarcely superior to the collections of St Patrick's wandering

¹ Stokes, *The Knowledge of Greek in Ireland*, 196. Cf. Werner, *Beda der Ehrwürdige*, 70. 'Von Hy aus machten irländische Mönche nach dem nördlichen England, und machten Northumbrien binnen Kurzem zu einem Hauptsitze der angel-sächsischen Gelehrsamkeit.'

² The semi-uncial of the Anglo-Saxon scribes was derived directly from an Irish source, though soon so modified as to acquire a distinct national character. The uncial of the Roman mission made but little way. In church architecture also the Irish square-built ends triumphed over the Roman apse. Cf. Hunt, *History of the English Church*, 597-1066, p. 202.

³ But Felix, the Apostle of East Anglia, is said to have founded a school (probably in connexion with his church at Dunwich) and supplied it with teachers 'after the model of Kent.' Bright, *op. cit.*, 143. Werner (*op. cit.*, 71) still accepts the fable which finds here the origin of the University of Cambridge.

priests¹. But Pope Vitalian's appointment of Theodore of Tarsus to the archbishopric changed the aspect of affairs. For, while Theodore himself was a ripe scholar, widely read in classical and patristic literature, both Greek and Latin², he was accompanied at Vitalian's command by the African Hadrian, abbot of a monastery near Naples, who had declined the archbishopric on his own account,—a man *Graecae pariter et Latinae linguae peritissimus*³, with a reputation for scholarship fully as high as Theodore's and with far more leisure to devote to its pursuit. And with these two strangers came Benedict Biscop, a Northumbrian noble some thirty years of age⁴, enthusiastic in the cause of learning and the Roman rite, who had recently embraced the monastic life in the famous abbey of Lérins, and now, like Hadrian, was commissioned by the Pope to accompany Theodore to his see. Thus it was that, while the School of Canterbury rose to prominence through the new learning of the Roman mission, that learning found its way almost simultaneously to the distant kingdom of the north.

Theodore and Biscop were the first to reach Canterbury, where they appeared on 27 May, 669; and Biscop at once took charge of the monastery of SS. Peter and Paul in that city, pending the coming of Hadrian, on whose arrival he immediately resigned the abbacy, and thus found himself free to devote his energies to the interests of his native kingdom.

¹ Hooker, *Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury*, i. 165.

² Bede, *Hist. Eccles.* iv. 1.

³ *Id. ibid.*

⁴ He was a 'King's Thegn,' born c. 638, and had sacrificed wealth, position, and the prospect of military fame, that—as Bede expressed it—he might 'take service under the true King.'

The fame of the foreign scholars spread far and wide, and eager students soon crowded round them to drink of the new 'streams of learning.' The thirst for knowledge, which had hitherto been driving Anglo-Saxons to the fountains of wisdom in Ireland, could now be quenched at home. Hadrian and (when the duties of his office permitted) Theodore proved willing teachers, and the enthusiasm of their hearers knew no bounds. 'Why,' cried one of them, 'why should Ireland, whither troops of students are carried in fleets from this country, enjoy any such supreme distinction, as if here, on the fertile soil of England, Greek and Roman masters were not to be found to solve the hard problems of the heavenly library for all who seek to learn of them? Ireland indeed, abounding in pupils and teachers, as a green pasture teems with countless flocks, resembles the skies bright with shining stars in sparkling constellations; but our Britain of the western clime, placed as it were almost on the verge of the world, enjoys rather the light of the flaming sun itself and of the gentle moon. I speak of the pontiff Theodore, nurtured from his earliest years in the best philosophical learning, and of his fellow-worker Hadrian, endowed beyond measure with the rarest gifts. Testifying boldly and openly, without deceit or falsehood, and weighing the matter in the impartial scales of truth, I will give my decision. Though Theodore of blessed memory... were surrounded by a crowd of Irish scholars, he would scatter them with ease, rending them with the tusk of grammar, like a fierce boar hemmed in by growling hounds of the Molossian breed, or, like a valiant archer hard pressed by the close phalanx of the enemy, piercing

them through and through with the sharp arrows of chronography¹.

With such eagerness it was that the Anglo-Saxon scholars pressed round Theodore and Hadrian, and drank in their instructions in the Greek and Latin tongues, their expositions of Holy Scripture and the articles of the Faith, and their explanations of the intricacies of ecclesiastical music², the problems of geometry, or the simple rules of medicine³. Two generations later Bede, who described Tobias of Rochester, one of Hadrian's pupils, as a man of multifarious learning in the Latin, Greek, and Saxon tongues⁴, could name acquaintances of his own who had learnt at Canterbury to speak Greek as fluently as English⁵.

Nor were the scholars unworthy of their teachers. Aldhelm, Abbot of Malmesbury and Bishop of Sherborne; John of Beverley, Bishop of Hexham; Offthor and Tobias, Bishops of Worcester and Rochester respectively; and Albinus, Hadrian's successor at Can-

¹ Aldhelm, *Ep. ad Eahfridum*, ap. Migne, *Patrol. Lat.*, lxxxix. 94.

² From the days of Augustine onwards Canterbury had been the home of the Roman chant, and Theodore is said to have introduced there the organ, an instrument then unknown in the Gallican Church, and mentioned probably for the first time by any Western writer in the works of Pope Vitalian himself. Hook, *op. cit.*, i. 198; Smith, *D.C.A.* ii. 1524 a.

³ Bede, *Hist. Eccles.*, v. 3.

⁴ Bright, *op. cit.*, 429.

⁵ Tradition credits Theodore's library with 'a Homer, a Josephus, and a Chrysostom in the original Greek' (Drane, *op. cit.*, 64); and it may be surmised that these volumes were not the only samples of their class. On the other hand among the Greek mss. assigned to Theodore by Archbishop Parker some were really of the thirteenth, fourteenth, or even fifteenth century. Cf. James, *The Sources of Archbishop Parker's MSS. in C. C. C. Cambridge*, 9, where the claim of the Corpus Homer to be one of Theodore's mss. is refuted. There is an interesting discussion of Theodore's work by Mr J. Gennadius and others in the *Times* of September 1—16, 1896.

terbury, who gave such valued help to Bede, were among the many who spread the fame of Hadrian's teaching throughout the length and breadth of England.

The history of Anglo-Saxon letters from the coming of Theodore to the death of Alcuin falls naturally into three divisions, corresponding to the lives of three famous scholars, Aldhelm of Malmesbury, Bede of Jarrow, and Alcuin of York. Three times within a hundred years, twice in Northumbria and once in Wessex, England produced a man of letters whose varied attainments or encyclopaedic knowledge, judged by the standard of contemporary learning, proclaimed him, without fear of contradiction, a scholar indeed.

Aldhelm lived and taught in the glad early days when Theodore and Hadrian were welcomed to their English home.

Bede spent his 60 years in the full maturity of that Anglo-Saxon culture which found in him perhaps its truest and its best exponent.

Alcuin left England for the last time when the pride of Northumbrian learning was already threatened with destruction by the Danes.

And these three names—Aldhelm, Bede, and Alcuin—stand for three great English schools—Canterbury Jarrow, and York.

Three great schools, and three great scholars; and then the golden age was over, and the intellectual primacy of Europe passed from the School of Egbert to the Schools of Charles the Great.

Aldhelm.

Aldhelm or Ealdhelm, the first great scholar of Anglo-Saxon England, was born about the middle of the seventh century¹, perhaps at Brokenburgh, near Malmesbury. Of royal descent on both sides², he displayed from childhood a passion for learning. His first teacher was an Irish monk called Moeldubh ('Maidulf' in the Saxon tongue) 'in erudition a philosopher³,' whose humble monastery and wooden church were built on a Wiltshire hill, under the walls of the old British castle of Ingelborne. There, after receiving the tonsure in 661, Aldhelm obeyed Maidulf as his abbot, till in 670 reports of the new intellectual life at Canterbury reawakened his old enthusiasm for letters, and with the sanction of his bishop he became a pupil in Hadrian's school. He left, only to return; but illness curtailed his second visit, and obliged him to go home to his Wiltshire monastery. The talents which his teachers had at once discerned, however, were not destined to be unemployed. Thanks to his reputation, the school of Maidulf rapidly rose in importance, and attracted scholars from every quarter.

Such a man, *praestans ingenio facundiaque Romana, ac vario flore litterarum etiam Graecorum more*, trained by a saint of Irish race, yet acquainted at first hand

¹ Probably between 639—645. His reference to Hadrian, who came to England in 670, as *rudis meae infantiae praeceptor* cannot be taken literally. Cf. Ebert, *Literatur d. Mittelalters*, 2te Auflage, i. 623, n. 3.

² His father, Kenten or Centwine, belonged to the royal house of Wessex: his mother to the Northumbrian dynasty. Hahn: apud Hauck, *Realencyclopädie*, s.v. *Aldhelm*.

³ Bright, *op. cit.*, 294.

with the glories and the usages of Rome¹, an Irish admirer and would-be pupil once declared, was of all men the teacher most to be desired². *Currebatur ad Aldelmum totis semitis*, says the chronicler of Malmesbury, and those who could not come learnt from him what they might by letters. Princes such as Aldfrith of Northumbria, Ædilwald of Mercia, and the Irish Artwil were numbered among his correspondents³, and, like Boniface and Alcuin at a later date, he found women apt and ready pupils⁴. Even in St Furse's distant abbey, in Péronne, the Irish monk Cellanus heard of his learning, and begged to be allowed the privilege of receiving at least *paucos sermunculos* from so great a scholar⁵. And, though to modern eyes his style seems 'pompous and pedantic,' 'an anticipation by twelve centuries of the Johnsonian dialect⁶,' his writings, notably the *De Laudibus Virginitatis* in prose and verse⁷, gained him further fame. The bombastic manner which he affected, the childlike *naïveté* with which he paraded all his learning and strewed his pages with Graecisms as meaningless as they are disconcerting, doubtless impressed the

¹ Aldhelm visited Rome, apparently in 692. Cf. Hahn, *u.s.*

² *Ep.* 5.

³ Ædilwald and Artwil consulted him about their own literary performances.

⁴ His most famous work, the *De Laudibus Virginitatis*, was written for Hildelitha, Abbess of Barking, and her nuns, who are represented in the act of receiving it in a curious illumination at the beginning of an eighth or ninth century ms. of the treatise: the illustration is reproduced in *Social England* (illustrated edition) i. 307.

⁵ *Ep.* 8. Cf. Traube, *Perrona Scottorum*.

⁶ Drane, *op. cit.*, 70.

⁷ Besides this a collection of *Ænigmata*, included in an *Epistola ad Acircium* (sc. Aldfrith) on versification, poems on the altars of St Mary and the Twelve Apostles, with a little treatise *De Pentateucho*, and a few other short poems and verses, are all that have been identified, but some may have been lost, and some perhaps, though extant, are still unrecognised. Cf. Morley, *English Writers*, ii. 132—139; Ebert, *op. cit.*, i. 124—134; and the Bishop of Bristol's *St Aldhelm*, which appeared after this chapter had gone to press.

ignorance of his contemporaries. For, whether the Irish¹, or the British², or Hadrian of Naples³ first corrupted the Anglo-Saxons, or whether it was of their own proper motion that they sinned⁴, it is certain that they soon delighted 'to disfigure their pages with a jumble of Greek, Latin and Anglo-Saxon syllables, and to expend their energy and ingenuity in compositions in which the great achievement was (perhaps) to produce fifteen consecutive words beginning with a P⁵.' Nor was Aldhelm's learning the less remarkable because it was thus ostentatiously displayed; the assertion that he knew Hebrew and could speak Greek may perhaps be rejected as a fable, but his quotations furnish irrefragable proof of a considerable acquaintance with Latin writers.

When, on the death of Maidulf, he succeeded to the abbacy⁶, his energetic rule made itself felt far and wide. Branch monasteries arose at Bradford and Frome, at Wareham and Sherborne⁷: churches were dotted about the country where none had been before: and at Malmesbury itself, with the blessing of the Pope and the co-operation of the learned abbess Bugge, the wooden church of Maidulf was replaced by a structure of stone, dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Nor was it only in the building of stone churches that Aldhelm proved himself

¹ Drane, *op. cit.*, 54; Ozanam, *La Civilisation Chrétienne chez les Français*, 497. Haddan (*op. cit.*, 267) remarks that the flowers of Aldhelm's eloquence were reserved for Irish friends.

² Hunt, *op. cit.*, 203. Lingard (*A.-S. Church*, ii. 153) notices the same inflation in the style of Gildas.

³ Hahn, *u.s.*

⁴ Cf. William of Malmesbury, *Gesta*, i. 31. 'Graeci involute, Romani circumspecte, Galli splendide, Angli pompaticè dictare solent.'

⁵ Drane, *u.s.*

⁶ c. 675, Bright, *op. cit.*, 295. Hahn (*u.s.*) gives 26 August, 676.

⁷ The church at Bradford is still standing. See Green, *Short History of England (illustrated edition)*, i. 68.

a follower of 'the Roman fashion.' The Celtic advocates of a 'simoniac tonsure' and a 'soul-destroying Easter' found in him an uncompromising (if also an undiscerning¹) foe, the exiled Wilfrid a doughty champion², and it has been accounted one of his greatest achievements that he led to triumph the Catholic cause in the south-west³.

So his life went on. He taught, he wrote, he collected books, he built—and persuaded his kinsman the King to build—till in 705, when the vast West Saxon diocese was at last divided, the western half was assigned to him, much against his will, and his 'bishop's stool' was fixed at Sherborne. Even then, at the urgent request of his monks, he continued to discharge his former functions, his duties being thus only increased and not exchanged on his advancement. But on 25 May, 709, he died, in the little wooden church at Dalting in Somerset, leaving the reputation of a man (in the words of his biographer) 'wonderful in each of his qualities, and peerless in them all⁴.'

With his death the brief literary glory of Wessex faded away. For more than a hundred and fifty years, though learning did not vanish till the close of the eighth century, no famous scholar appeared south of the Humber. The *prestige* of Canterbury, which had been to so large an extent the personal *prestige* of Hadrian, passed into a tradition. But meanwhile Benedict Biscop had sown the seeds of learning in Northumbria, and first Jarrow and then York became the cynosure of literary Britain.

¹ He mistakenly charged them with the error of the Quarto-Decimans.

² Cf. his letter to Wilfrid's clergy.

³ Hahn, *u.s.*

⁴ *Gul. Malm.*, v. 113, ap. Bright, *op. cit.*, 446.

CHAPTER III.

THE SCHOOL OF JARROW.

Benedict Biscop and Ceolfrid.

WHEN the arrival of Hadrian at Canterbury released Benedict Biscop from the duties of Abbot of SS. Peter and Paul, he seized the opportunity to make a fourth pilgrimage to Rome. On his return, laden with books, some bought, some given by friends, some procured from the *scriptoria* and libraries of Rome, others collected in the neighbourhood of Vienne, he made his way to Northumbria. There Ecgrith, the new King, was well disposed to the cause of learning, and forthwith granted him seventy hides of land near the mouth of the Wear, to endow a monastery dedicated to St Peter. The foundations were laid in 674, and when the church, built of stone 'after the Roman fashion,' was finished, and all was ready, the monks took possession of their home, where they obeyed a rule compiled from those of seventeen of the best monasteries, at home and abroad, which Benedict had visited in his travels. Meanwhile Biscop himself journeyed again to Rome, on this occasion in company with Ceolfrid, Prior of Wearmouth, and returned as before with 'an innumerable store of books of all kinds,' besides pictures and relics for the

church at Wearmouth. He brought also John the Precentor, who was sent by Pope Agatho, at Biscop's own request, to instruct the monks of Wearmouth in the Roman chant.

In 681 another grant of land from Ecgfrith, this time one of forty hides on the south bank of the Tyne, enabled Biscop to found a second monastery, dedicated to St Paul, where in the autumn of the same year ten tonsured and twelve untensured inmates of the older house began to observe the rule of Biscop under the abbacy of Ceolfrid. One of them, a child eight years old, was destined to bring a world-wide reputation to the School of Jarrow, and to be known to future generations as the Venerable Bede.

A little later Biscop visited Rome for the last time, returning in 686, as on former occasions, with a vast collection of literary and artistic treasures¹. He was gladly welcomed by the new King, Aldfrith (the 'Acircius' of Aldhelm's letter on 'Metre'), a man 'most learned in the Scriptures' and in knowledge of all sorts², a liberal patron of letters, and a faithful friend to both Aldhelm the West Saxon and Adamnan the Scot. But his active life was over. Creeping palsy gradually withered his strength, and after three years of illness he died, on the twelfth of January, 689. His labours had inaugurated a new era in Northumbria—an era in which a new type of religious house, increasingly self-centred, and pursuing knowledge as an

¹ 'Innumeris sicut semper ecclesiasticorum donis commodorum locupletatus...magna quidem copia voluminum sacrorum sed non minori sicut et prius sanctarum imaginum munere ditatus.' Bede, *Vita Abbatum*.

² Bede, *Hist. Eccles.*, iv. 26.

end in itself, to a large extent superseded the mere missionary centre of an earlier date. Henceforth 'the acknowledged leaders of thought and life were the great teachers and writers; art was encouraged and developed as a life work; and personal culture, as well as missionary activity, became an integral aspect of the ideal Christian life¹.' In his parting charge Biscop entreated the brethren to preserve intact the rich and noble library which he had brought from Rome, not suffering its contents to be carelessly injured or lost. And in this care for the library, as in other matters², Ceolfrid, his friend and fellow labourer, who had already been appointed Abbot of the twin foundations, followed his example.

While at Lindisfarne Ecgfrith wrote his famous Gospels, at Wearmouth, under Ceolfrid's supervision, three magnificent copies of the Vulgate were produced. Carrying with him one of these, the famous *Codex Amiatinus*, as a present for the Pope, the abbot set out in 716, with the intention of ending his days at Rome. But death overtook him on the way, and his beautiful offering was conveyed to Rome by other hands³.

There were other notable scholars in Northumbria during this period: Wilfrid, the famous champion of the Roman rite, who, like Biscop, built churches of

¹ Savage, *op. cit.*, 264.

² His letter on the Paschal controversy converted the Pictish clergy to the Roman reckoning.

³ MSS. like the *Codex Amiatinus*, the St John of Stonyhurst, the fragment of St Luke at Durham, and the fragments of SS. Matthew and John at the end of the Utrecht Psalter, bear witness, as has been justly observed, to the existence of a flourishing school of calligraphy at Wearmouth and Jarrow in the seventh and eighth centuries. White, *Studia Biblica*, ii. 287.

stone 'after the Roman fashion,' who taught the Northumbrian choirs to sing responsively 'according to the custom of the primitive Church,' who first brought the Benedictine rule into England, and gave to his church at Ripon one of those English manuscripts, written on purple vellum in letters of gold, which connect the splendid productions of the later Empire with the chrysograph Gospels of the Carolingian age; Cuthbert, who is said to have founded schools at Carlisle during his short episcopate at Lindisfarne; Adamnan, the Irish biographer of Columcille, who twice visited King Aldfrith, and presented to him his work *Of Holy Places*, copies of which were distributed by the royal order among the libraries of the kingdom; Eddi, whose life of Wilfrid, with the anonymous *Vita Ceolfridi*, heads the long list of English biographies; John of Beverley, Bishop first of Hexham and then of York, who handed on to the Northumbrian youth the teaching he had himself received from Theodore; and Acca, Wilfrid's friend, and successor (as both abbot and bishop) at Hexham, who provided his church with 'a most rich and noble library.' But, after all, Biscop and Ceolfrid occupy the foreground of the picture. They brought the learning of Canterbury to Northumbria, and undertook laborious journeys to collect manuscripts and pictures and relics, even succeeding (to all appearance) in obtaining some of the books brought to England by Hadrian from his Italian monastery, so that the feast of the famous saint of Naples appeared in the Calendar prefixed to the Lindisfarne Gospels. They reared the great twin abbeys, with their churches 'built of stone after the Roman fashion,' on which 'the civilisation and the

learning of the eighth century rested¹. And they 'formed in the silence of those monasteries the scholars who were to be the glory of the succeeding age².'

The most convincing proof of the excellence of any school is to be found in the achievements of its pupils, and it is thus that the worth of Biscop's twin foundations must be measured. Of Ceolfrid there are but the most meagre literary remains, of Biscop none. But they have their memorial in more than one great personality. For Wearmouth and Jarrow 'produced Bede, and through him the School of York, Alcuin, and the Carolingian School, on which the culture of the Middle Ages was based³.'

Bede.

'After Wilfrid's death,' remarks an ecclesiastical historian⁴, 'a generation of lesser men succeeds; there is hardly any striking or impressive character among those who appear in the public life of the Church until Egbert of York establishes and adorns the Northern Archbishopric, and his successor Ælbert carries on the glory of its theological school.'

Yet, six years before the death of Biscop, in the peaceful retirement of Jarrow, John of Beverley had admitted to the priesthood a scholar who, in piety and learning, was second to no preceding Northumbrian churchman.

Beda Venerabilis, 'the Father of English History,' was born, of noble Northumbrian parents, in the year

¹ Stubbs, *D. C. B.*, s.v. *Benedict Biscop*.

² Wright, *Biographia Britannica*, A.-S. Period, 186.

³ Stubbs, *u.s.*

⁴ Bright, *op. cit.*, 480.

673. Dedicated from his infancy to the religious life, he entered Biscop's monastery of Wearmouth at the age of seven, and a year afterwards was transferred, as one of its twelve untensured inmates, to the new house at Jarrow. There for fifty-four years he gave his life to study and devotion, regularly assisting at every sacred office 'lest the angels joining in the Church's worship should miss his presence there,' yet none the less finding time to take 'sweet pleasure in ever learning, teaching, or writing.'

Trumbert, sometime a disciple of Chad; Sigfrid, who like Cuthbert had heard Boisil teach; Eata, one of Aidan's earliest scholars; and perhaps John of Beverley, a pupil of Theodore and Hadrian, were among his first teachers, and there can be little doubt that John the Precentor, whose visit he was in later years to chronicle, found him a ready pupil in the Roman chant.

Thus, trained by teachers of various types, representing alike the Celtic and the Roman tradition, 'he enjoyed advantages which could not perhaps have been found anywhere else in Europe at the time; perfect access to all the existing sources of learning in the West. Nowhere else could he acquire at once the Irish, the Roman, the Gallican, and the Canterbury learning; the accumulated stores of books which Benedict had bought at Rome or at Vienne; or the disciplinary instruction drawn from the monasteries of the Continent as well as from the Irish missionaries¹.'

¹ Stubbs, *u.s.* If Martianus Capella was unknown in the Northumbrian monasteries, Bede at least encountered in his youth the writings of a *chronographus heresiarchus* of the fourth century. Cf. his letter to Plegwin.

Thus it was that he gained the multifarious learning which enabled him to quote the classical authors, Greek and Latin, to collate the Vulgate with the older versions of the Latin Bible, to show where the Greek text of the New Testament was more explicit than the Latin, and to prove in many another way the breadth of his culture. Of Hebrew perhaps he knew only what he could glean from his acquaintance with Jerome; his love of his native tongue is proved by his English translation of the Gospels and the Psalter, and his collection of Anglo-Saxon songs, some traditional, some of his own composition. Astronomy and kindred subjects had a great interest for him, but theology, the study of the Bible and the Fathers, was his chief delight.

In his nineteenth year he was ordained deacon, and at the age of thirty priest, on each occasion at the instance of Ceolfrid, and by the hands of John of Beverley. His fame soon spread beyond the walls of Jarrow, and he was, perhaps, the 'certain monk' whom Pope Sergius I. asked Ceolfrid to send to Rome to aid in the settlement of some ecclesiastical differences there¹. Whoever that monk may have been, the death of Sergius put an end to the plan; and, so far as is known, Bede left his home only twice: once to see a priest called Wicred, and once, a year or so before his death, to visit at York his friend and pupil Egbert. In his monastery he lived and laboured to the end. Untroubled by the restless promptings of ambition, he never rose above the standing of a simple priest. But, in book after book, he embodied all the learning of his time, arranged, adapted, or epitomised to meet the varying require-

¹ Haddan and Stubbs, *op. cit.*, iii. 148.

ments of his readers. Commentaries on the Bible fill the largest place in the catalogue of his works, which however includes treatises on 'Orthography,' 'Metre,' and 'Tropes,' on 'Times' and 'The Nature of Things,' on 'Thunder,' and on 'Bleeding,' besides sermons, hymns, letters, and other compositions in verse and prose. But his masterpiece was the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, completed in 731, which, unlike his lives of St Cuthbert and of the Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow, was an original work. In it he traced with loving care the rise and spread of Christianity in his native land, a theme rendered doubly attractive to him by the passionate patriotism of his intensely English nature.

His labours continued to the very end. The fear that, when he was gone, his pupils, through no fault of their own, might be led astray by false teaching spurred him on to exertions perhaps too great for his failing strength. But he never faltered, and when at last death came to him it found him busily engaged in yet one more task, an English rendering of the early chapters of St John's Gospel. It was the eve of Ascension Day, 735. The boy who was taking down his words hesitated to press the dying man with questions. But Bede insisted on his continuing to write. Presently a single chapter, at last a single sentence, alone remained. Then his task was finished, and, chanting the *Gloria*, his head supported by his pupil's hands, the aged scholar died.

The missionary Boniface likened his death to the extinction of a brightly burning light¹. For, secluded

¹ *Epp.* 75, 76. *M.G.H.*, *Epp.* iii., 347—348. The date of the letters, however, which Duemmler gives as 744—747, seems to show that the fame of Bede had been somewhat slow in reaching Boniface.

as his life had been, his fame had reached many a place where his face was never seen. He had been helped in the preparation of his *History* by Albinus, the successor of Abbot Hadrian; Nothelm, a priest of London, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury; Daniel, Bishop of Winchester, the friend of Boniface; Cynebert, Bishop of Sidnacester; the monks of Lastingham; the East Anglian Abbot Esi; and others; while Ceolwulf, King of Northumbria; Acca, Bishop of Hexham; Huetbert, Abbot of Jarrow; Egbert, Bishop of York; and the faithful Cuthbert, afterwards Abbot of Wearmouth, were numbered among his friends and patrons. And, though his writings represent but little really original work, though they testify rather to the ceaselessness of his industry than to the brilliancy of his genius, they exercised an influence absolutely unparalleled over the learning of medieval Europe. 'He was the master of all the Middle Ages. His sound and comprehensive treatises furnished every monastery for centuries with the necessary instruction in astronomy; his Paschal tables were regarded as indispensable for the computation of the ecclesiastical calendar, even where nothing further was attempted; his *Martyrologium* formed the basis of every subsequent revision; his little "Chronicle of the Six Ages of the World" was known in every quarter; and his *Ecclesiastical History* was read with eagerness by men who recognised that the story of the English Church was identical with the early story of their own, and who found in his work a constant reminder of that identity¹.'

¹ Cf. Wattenbach, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter*, i. 130.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SCHOOL OF YORK.

THREE years before Bede died, his favourite pupil Egbert, to whom the most famous of his letters is addressed, succeeded Wilfrid II. in the see of York. In 735, in accordance with Bede's own earnest wishes, the see was restored to metropolitan rank, and Egbert became Archbishop of the Northern Province. By these events a man imbued with the learned traditions of Jarrow was placed in the position of greatest influence in the Northumbrian Church, and at the death of Bede York supplanted Jarrow as the home of English letters. For Egbert established there a third great English school, which, thanks to his fostering care, acquired an influence far wider than had belonged to either of its predecessors. The old Roman city of Eboracum became the intellectual centre of Christian Europe, north of Italy and Spain, and maintained that position for nearly half-a-century, till Alcuin left his Northumbrian home to impart to Frankish pupils at Aachen and at Tours the learning he had himself amassed under Egbert and his two successors. Nor was it only in the extent of its influence that York

excelled alike Canterbury and Jarrow. Its reputation was more solid and more enduring than theirs. The fame of Canterbury had been to a great extent the personal fame of Theodore and Hadrian, the fame of Jarrow (apart from the splendid library of Ceolfrid and Biscop) the personal fame of Bede. But York possessed not only great individual teachers and great literary treasures but a certain corporate character and continuous vitality which were all its own. The motto of Alcuin, *disce ut doceas*¹, was the motto of the school where he was trained, and the best pupils of one generation became the teachers of the next. And again, education was organised at York as in England, perhaps, it had never been organised before. System, or in other words the classification, division, and specialisation of work, was a marked feature in the school². When Alcuin, writing to Eanbald II. in 796, insisted on the separation of the students into distinct classes for reading, for singing, and for writing respectively, and on the appointment of a special master to every class³, or when, at Tours, he described how he taught some of his pupils grammar, others 'the ancient learning,' others astronomy, and others the Holy Scriptures⁴, there can be little doubt that he was describing the system familiar to his early years.

To Ælbert, the kinsman and eventual successor of

¹ Cf. *Ep.* 19 [27], 'discant pueri...ut...alios docere...possint. Qui non discit in pueritia non docet in senectute'; *Ep.* 31 [88], 'Qui non discit non docet'; etc. etc.

[N.B. Where Alcuin's letters are cited the numbering of both Duemmler's and Jaffé's editions is given, the second in brackets.]

² Cf. Stopford Brooke, *English Literature*, 120 seq.

³ *Ep.* 114 [72].

⁴ *Ep.* 121 [78].

Egbert, but at this time *Defensor Cleri* and Master of the School, it naturally fell to direct the studies of the time-honoured *Trivium* and *Quadrivium*, and even, to some extent, to lecture on the Scriptures. But Egbert made it his care, whenever his official duties permitted, to devote the earlier hours of the day to giving Biblical and doctrinal instruction, especially to the ablest of the students¹; while at their simple evening meal he would listen with them to the words of a reader, that minds as well as bodies might be refreshed, bestowing his blessing on them all in turn before they retired to rest.

The efforts of the Archbishop were ably seconded by Ælbert, whose keen enthusiasm still breathes in the letters of the pupil whose life-work he inspired. He deemed it a disgrace that the wisdom which the learned men of old had gathered together should be lost to the world through the sloth or carelessness of their successors. And, like Biscop and Ceolfrid, he journeyed more than once to 'Rome and the kingdom of the Franks' in search of new books and fresh knowledge, returning to York, in spite of the efforts of foreign princes to secure his services for their own dominions, and housing his treasures in that library which became his greatest title to fame².

¹ Cf. *Vit. Alc.* 4, 'Hechberto praesuli...traditur quasi lactis inscius, fortibus jam alendus panibus.'

² Alcuin, *Carm.* i. *De SS. Eboracensis Ecclesiae*, ll. 1453—1463. The correspondence of Boniface and Lul shows Egbert having the letters of Gregory the Great transcribed for him at Rome, and Ælbert sending to the Continent for the books of 'certain cosmographers' of which at York there were only imperfect specimens, while in return the Anglo-Saxons abroad received from them copies of works which the cathedral library possessed.

From the vague words of Alcuin's biographer, describing the noble youths of Northumbria flocking to Egbert for instruction, 'some in the rudiments of grammar, some in the liberal arts, some in the Holy Scriptures,' and all alike in the virtues and graces of the Christian life¹, and from Alcuin's own fanciful description of Ælbert's labours², the nature of the studies pursued at York may be very fairly estimated. The Seven Liberal Arts, which comprised the sum total of medieval secular education in the elementary *Trivium*, Grammar, Rhetoric, and Dialectic, and the more advanced *Quadrivium*, Music and Arithmetic, Geometry and Astronomy, were all of them cultivated with more or less success³.

Grammar, which might include anything from the dry and meagre elements of Priscian and Donatus to the fullest acquaintance with classical literature and philology, involved at York at least some knowledge of the principal Latin classics. Rhetoric, under which head was comprised the art of composition in prose and verse, and, so far as it was practised, the study of law⁴, held the next important place. And even Dialectic, though the age of its triumph was still far distant, and the treatises available for its study were few and meagre⁵, was not wholly neglected.

¹ *Vit. Alc.* 4.

² *De SS. Ebor. Eccles.* 1433—1448, translated by West, *Alcuin*, 32.

³ A full account of the *Trivium* and *Quadrivium* is given by Specht, *Geschichte des Unterrichtswesens in Deutschland*, 86—149.

⁴ Cf. Alcuin's 'juridica curavit cote polire,' and Aldhelm (*Ep. ad Heddam*) 'qui...legum Romanarum jura medullitus rimabitur.' *Ep.* 245 [180] shows that at some time in his career Alcuin had learnt to know the *Breviarium Alarici*.

⁵ In Alcuin's day only Boethius' translations of Porphyry and the

In the *Quadrivium* Music meant little more than the rules of plain song and the mystical doctrine of numbers; Arithmetic, the slow manipulation of the cumbrous Roman numerals for the solution of chronological problems or the laborious working of simple sums; Geometry, less what is now understood by the term than the study of geography and of nature in her various forms¹, and even, inasmuch as they dealt with the healing properties of herbs, of the rules of medicine²; Astronomy, the knowledge of the course of the sun, the moon, and the stars, and their effect on the calendar, ecclesiastical and civil, a subject which was in high repute, and had for many minds a more powerful attraction than any other branch of science.

At York these studies were treated as possessing an intrinsic interest; and from the successive teachers of the school its scholars learnt to delight in reading and imitating the poetry of Virgil, or constructing arithmetical puzzles, soluble or insoluble, or gathering up what the wisdom of the ancients had discovered as to the mysterious laws of nature. It was indeed never forgotten that they were but steps to a higher knowledge, that by the seven ascents of the liberal arts men

De Interpretatione with his commentary, some of his logical writings, and the pseudo-Augustine on the *Categories*, were generally known. Rashdall, *Universities*, i. 37.

¹ Cf. *Versus de SS. Ebor. Eccles.*, vv. 1441—1444.

² So at least thought Vergilius Maro of Toulouse, cited by Rashdall, *op. cit.*, i. 33, n. 2. 'Geometria est ars disciplinata quae omnium herbarum graminumque experimentum enuntiat: unde et medicos hac fretos geometres vocamus, id est, expertos graminum.' Rabanus Maurus recommended the study of geometry especially to medical men, on the ground that it explained the position and climatic conditions of countries. Specht, *op. cit.*, 145.

/ came at length to the crowning science of theology. For Grammar and Rhetoric were essential to the understanding of the threefold meaning of the Scriptures, whose mystical use of numbers, further, could be fully grasped only by those acquainted with Music and Arithmetic; Dialectic might be pressed into the service of Christ for the logical refutation of heresy, and without it some of the greatest truths of Christianity could not be even dimly apprehended; while Geometry and Astronomy, the study of the divine handiwork, impressed the student with the wisdom and majesty of God, as perhaps in ages past the study of the stars had brought the Hebrew patriarch to a knowledge of their Creator¹.

And thus, besides their practical value for ecclesiastical purposes, the performance of the Church's services or the correct observance of the Church's calendar, the Seven Arts had a special dignity and importance as the necessary introduction to the highest study of all.

But there was, it would seem, at York an enthusiasm for learning in itself, even apart from the ecclesiastical and religious ends, mediate and immediate, which it was undoubtedly expected to subserve—an enthusiasm which raised the tone of the place far above the elementary and technical utilitarianism so common in the medieval schools, and gave to its studies a character which could almost be accounted liberal².

¹ *Ep.* 148 [99], 'Fertur itaque Abraham patriarcha ex astrologiae ratione creatorem Deum intellexisse et venerasse.'

² Cf. Hauck, ii. 171. 'Während Gregor (of Utrecht) seine Kleriker schulte pflegte man in England die liberale Bildung. Das war überhaupt der Unterschied zwischen den deutschen und den englischen

In this respect the School of York resembled its Irish predecessors, which had been characterised by a like devotion to learning for its own sake. But its traditions were distinctly and essentially Roman. Bede was the model of its masters¹, and the catalogue of Ælbert's library contained in Alcuin's verses on the Saints of York² bears witness to the rigid orthodoxy of its tone. Boethius and Cassiodorus, or the Spanish Isidore, supplied its scholars with their general information, not Martianus Capella, the text-book of the Irish schools, which is never even mentioned in the voluminous writings of Alcuin. The school indeed represented a movement which was gaining strength from day to day, and which in later years commanded the sympathy and the support of Alcuin himself. The spirit which

Schulen. Der Gesichtskreis war dort weiter; der Zweck nicht rein praktisch. Was man erstrebte, näherte sich dem, was wir mit den Worten Bildung und Wissenschaft bezeichnen.' The third *Vita Luidgeri* emphasises the fact that at York Luidger read not only the whole of the Old and New Testament, but also 'nonnullos saecularis litteraturae libros,' whereas at Utrecht Abbot Gregory 'saecularem litteraturam non multipere scire curavit.'

¹ Cf. *Vit. Alc.* 4; enumerating, as the men whom Egbert followed, Gregory the Great, Augustine of Canterbury, Benedict Biscop, Cuthbert, Theodore, and Bede.

² *Versus de SS. Ebor. Eccles.* 1535—1561. The names given are: Jerome, Hilary, Ambrose, Augustine, Athanasius, Orosius, Gregory, Leo, Basil, Fulgentius, Cassiodorus, Chrysostom, Aldhelm, Bede, Victorinus, Boethius, Pompeius, Pliny, Aristotle, Cicero, Sedulius, Juvenius, Alcimus, Clemens, Prosper, Paulinus, Arator, Virgil, Statius, Lucan, Probus, Focas, Donatus, Priscian, Servius, Euticius, Pompeius, and Comminianus. But the list is professedly incomplete, omitting, as Hauck observes, the names of various works on arithmetic and geometry which must have been in the library. Isidore is probably passed over from considerations of metre; Gildas (unless Alcuin knew his writings only through Bede's citations), Ovid, and perhaps Horace and Terence, should be reckoned among the 'alios perplures...magistros,' whose works Alcuin had not had time to enumerate. Hauck observes that he was unacquainted with ecclesiastical literature before Constantine, and knew little of classical writers apart from poetry and scholastic treatises.

had possessed Wilfrid when, at Rome, 'kneeling in the church of the monastery of St Andrew, from which Augustine had set out on his mission to Canterbury, he devoted himself to the task of winning the whole of England for the Latin rite¹,' still inspired the great leaders of the English Church. At the Synod of Whitby the task had been partially, but only partially, accomplished. The stone churches built by Wilfrid and Biscop 'after the Roman fashion,' the lessons imparted by John the Precentor to the monks of Wearmouth, the Benedictine rule introduced by Wilfrid into his own foundations, marked a further advance in the assimilation of the English Church to the Roman model. In 747, again, the Council of Cloveshoo enjoined a strict obedience to the Roman use in the observation of fasts and festivals, the keeping of the canonical hours, the recitation of the Litany, the commemoration of St Gregory and St Augustine, the administration of baptism, the celebration of the Mass, the use of the Roman chant². And, forty years later, the legatine Synod of Pincanhale³ followed in the same line, and demanded that even the garb of monks and canons should be determined by the Roman custom. By that time the most famous scholar of the School of York, who represented to the fullest extent at once its strength and its weakness, its virtues and its limitations, had reached middle life, and had already begun to transplant its learning and its traditions to the congenial soil of the Frankish kingdom.

¹ Bates, *History of Northumbria*, 59.

² cc. xi. xiii. and xv—xviii.

³ Generally identified with Finchale. The Synod was held in 786.

CHAPTER V.

ALCUIN'S LIFE : c. 735—793.

ALCUIN was born, of noble Northumbrian parentage, in the second quarter of the eighth century¹. His lot was cast in evil times. In the eighth century, 'the Northumbrian Court (except in Ceolwulf's later years) presented an ignoble and pitiable spectacle of violence, vice, and intrigue².' Even the reigns of Ceolwulf³ and Eadbert⁴ were not undisturbed by civil strife. Ceolwulf was once, in 731, actually forced into a monastery, and though Eadbert triumphed easily over all pretenders, and established a reputation which secured for him the

¹ Both the year and the place of his birth are uncertain. The date usually given is 735 ; but, as in 796 he already complained of old age and weakness, his birth should perhaps be placed a few years earlier. York and London have both been assigned as his birthplace, while one biographer (Feller, *Biographie Universelle*, s.v. *Alcuin*), carried away by the spirit of compromise, prefers to place it 'near London in Yorkshire': nothing, however, is really known about it except that he was a Northumbrian. No writer mentions the name of either of his parents, nor does he himself ever refer to them ; but his life of Willihad shows that he was related to Willibrord, from whose father Willigis he inherited a *cella maritima* dedicated to St Andrew at the mouth of the Humber ; and on his finally resolving to abandon England he renounced considerable estates in Northumbria. On the proper spelling of his name cf. Duemmiler in *M.G.H., Epp. IV.*, p. 1.

² Savage, *op. cit.*, 270.

³ 729—737.

⁴ 737—756.

alliance even of Pippin the Short, the disastrous defeat of Dumbarton in 756 completely overwhelmed him. He abdicated, like his predecessor, and became a canon in his brother's cathedral church. His son and successor Oswulf was murdered within a year by his own servants, and the new king, Æthelwald Moll, after defeating a rival, was himself deposed by the Northumbrian Witan at Finchale. Alcred was elected in his place, only to be dethroned in his turn in 774 by the same authority, in favour of his predecessor's son Æthelred, and Æthelred, five years later, was driven into exile and succeeded by Alfwald, 'the friend of God,' whose justice and piety however did not avail to save him from assassination in 788. Osred, son of Alcred, took his place, but was betrayed and tonsured a year later, when the exiled Æthelred was recalled to the throne. In 796 Æthelred was murdered, and after the twenty-seven days of Oswald's rule Eadwulf became king, and was still reigning when Alcuin died.

Thus within seventy years ten kings reigned in Northumbria. The words in which two centuries before the Visigoths had been described by Gregory of Tours might almost be applied to Alcuin's fellow-countrymen. 'They had adopted this detestable custom, that, if any of their kings pleased them not, him they slew, and made whomsoever they would to be king over them¹.' For royal and noble blood watered the soil; the ancient dynasties, 'a blessing to their subjects, a terror to their enemies,' vanished from the scene; men of unknown lineage unworthily occupied their place;

¹ *Historia Francorum*, iii. 30.

and anarchy reigned supreme¹. Only in Northumbria there was no heresy, like the Arianism of the Visigoths, to be conveniently made answerable for misfortune; and Alcuin was fain to find a reason for the disasters that befell his sovereigns in the sins which too often disfigured their own lives. From the days of Alfwald, he declared, the kingdom had been flooded with crime², and at least in other parts of England the reputation even of famous nunneries had not remained unspotted³. Possibly Alcuin overstated the case; to his anxious eye perhaps the shadows of the picture seemed blacker than they really were: for, 'grave as were the occasional scandals in other parts of the country⁴, no definite accusation of any serious moment was brought against any of the regular Northumbrian houses⁵.' On the other hand two prominent vices, the besetting sins of the Anglo-Saxons, were constantly denounced in all the literature of the day.

A passion for luxury in dress was characteristic of the race. 'A woman of rank,' says Lingard, quoting from the *De Laudibus Virginitatis* of Aldhelm, 'wore an undervest of fine linen of a violet colour, and over it a scarlet tunic with full skirts, and with wide sleeves and

¹ As in Mercia, after Offa's death, 'vix aliquis ex antiqua regum prosapia inveniebatur,' 'et tanto incertioris erant originis quanto minoris erant fortitudinis' (*Ep.* 29 [6]). Alcuin was referring both to Eadwulf of Northumbria and to Ceonwulf of Mercia when he wrote to Offa's daughter Aethelburga 'reges vobiscum tyranni facti sunt, non rectores; nec ut olim reges a regendo sed a rapiendo dicuntur' (*Ep.* 300 [229]).

² 'A diebus Aelfwaldi regis fornicationes, adulteria, et incestus inundaverunt super terram'; Osred especially being a notorious offender.

³ *Ep.* 16 [22].

⁴ *E.g.* at Coldingham.

⁵ Savage, *op. cit.*, 270.

hood, both striped or faced with silk. The hair was curled with irons over the forehead and temples; ornaments of gold in the form of crescents encircled the neck; bracelets were worn on the arms and rings with precious stones on the fingers, the nails of which were pared to a point, to resemble the talons of a falcon. The shoes were of red leather, and stibium was employed to paint the face.' The men were no less addicted to fine clothing than the women: their dress 'was not unlike to that of the females; only they wore the tunic shorter, and bound the legs with fillets of various colours. Both sexes on occasions of ceremony wore mantles of blue cloth, with facings of crimson silk, ornamented with stripes or vermicular figures, *vermium imaginibus clavata*¹.' It is scarcely wonderful that to Lul the missionary *flammea puella* seemed an appropriate synonym for 'a fashionable lady,' or that Alcuin rarely omitted to enjoin *modestia vestimentorum* in letters to his countrymen². Such extravagance was blameworthy even among the laity. St Peter himself had warned women against the adornments 'of plaiting the hair, of wearing of gold, of putting on of apparel³,' and the luxury of the nobles meant often enough the poverty of the people⁴. On the part of the clergy, regular or secular, it was infinitely worse, and yet scarcely less common. The 'coarse woollen tunic and robe, the cowl and the long sleeves' of sixth century monasticism were too sober a costume for Anglo-Saxon taste: if they were

¹ *A.-S. Church*, i, 229.

² Cf. *Savage, loc. cit.*

³ *Ep.* 19 [27].

⁴ *Ep.* 16 [22], 'Alii enormitate vestium laborant, alii frigore pereunt.'

ever generally adopted in the monasteries in most cases at least they must have been speedily discarded. For Cuthbert stood almost alone in his day in wearing *communia vestimenta*, and that after his death his monks still followed his example Bede considered a remarkable testimony to the power of his influence. The Council of Cloveshoo in 747 prescribed to monks and nuns the use of sober clothing, suited to their vocation, forbidding the clergy to bind their legs with fillets in lay fashion, or to wear, like laymen, *coculas in circumdatione capitis*, contrary to the custom of the Church¹, while the Synod of Pincanhale required a distinction in dress between canons and monks and secular clergy, the fashion of the 'Orientals' being followed, and the use of Indian dyes and precious stuffs eschewed. Yet the correspondence of Alcuin, as of Boniface before him, teems with protests against extravagance in dress, a practice which, in the clergy at least, he regarded as nothing less than serious sin².

Of drunkenness, the other characteristically English vice³, the same tale was to be told. At Lindisfarne,

¹ cc. 19 and 26. Cf. Pope John VI's letter on the subject, written probably in 704, commending certain Anglo-Saxon clerics at Rome who, on the Eve of St Gregory, had abandoned their irregular habit for the close-cut cassock of the Roman priest. Haddan and Stubbs, iii. 264.

² Cp. *Epp.* 19 [27], 21 [25], 22 [26], 34 [292], 37 [283], 42 [34], 114 [72], 124 [81]. Even the Archbishop of Canterbury and his companions had to be warned not to shock Charles the Great by their luxurious clothing.

³ Boniface, who charged even English bishops with tempting others to excess, considered that, at least among Christian peoples, habitual intemperance was peculiar to his own countrymen, neither Franks, Gauls, Lombards, Greeks, nor Romans being addicted to it; and Alcuin had little to say on the subject except in his letters to Anglo-Saxons.

according to Simeon of Durham, the monks had been content with milk and water till King Ceolwulf, renouncing the splendour of the crown but not the pleasures of the table, introduced the use of wine and beer. But in 747 the vice was deemed so common that the Council of Cloveshoo devoted a whole canon to the subject, forbidding the clergy either to drink to excess themselves or to tempt others to do so¹, while it dealt with other social evils on a much smaller scale: and Alcuin's letters to his English friends are filled with denunciations of the same offence.

These vices were the failings of men who were at least professing Christians. But there was still a danger, real though perhaps remote, of a widespread relapse into paganism. The old religion feigned death, but it was not really dead. Its spirit still survived in many customs which the Church was unable to suppress.

Theodore and Wihtraed had reprobated such survivals as sacrifices to demons and idols, incantations, auguries, and divinations. The Synod of Pincanhale drew up a formal indictment of the Anglo-Saxon people on these very points. 'You tattoo your bodies,' so it ran, 'like the pagans who obey the motions of the devil; you wear your clothes in the same way as the heathen whom your fathers conquered by the help of God: truly wonderful it is that you should imitate the very men whose manner of life you have ever detested! Following a shameful custom you mutilate your horses, slitting their nostrils, fastening their ears together and making

¹ c. 21.

them deaf, and docking their tails. We hear, too, that in your disputes you cast lots in pagan fashion, a thing now accounted nothing less than sacrilege; and many of you eat horse-flesh¹, a thing which no Christian among the Orientals does².

Such customs were easy enough to censure, but very difficult to suppress. Others, condemned by Alcuin in his correspondence, such as the wearing of relics and Scripture texts as charms, 'a pharisaical superstition³,' were instances of old pagan customs clothed in a Christian dress. The policy of utilising heathen institutions for Christian purposes, of transforming temples into churches, and sacrifices to idols into Christian feasts, did indeed facilitate the advance of Christianity, but it made the revival of paganism an ever-present danger. The relics of the old superstitions which survive to the present day can be viewed without concern; it is now a matter of indifference that, in the festive observances of Christmas, and in the very name of Easter, the customs of a pagan festival and the name of the goddess Eostre are perpetuated. But in the days of Alcuin it was otherwise; heathenism was too near, too real a danger to be trifled with; it was scarcely dead among the Anglo-Saxons themselves, and

¹ The eating of horseflesh, a practice connected with the worship of Odin, was common also among Boniface's German converts.

² Savage, *op. cit.*; cf. *Ep.* 16 [27].

³ *Ep.* 290 [219], 'Melius est in corde sanctorum imitare exempla, quam in sacculis portare ossa; evangelicas habere scriptas ammonitiones in mente magis quam pittaciolis exaratas in collo circumferre. Haec est pharisaica superstitio; quibus ipsa veritas impropertavit philacteria sua'; *Ep.* 291 [220] deals with the same question. Cf. the condemnation of *filacteria*, &c. by the Frankish Synod of 742. *M. G. H.*, *Leg.* ii. i., 25, § 5.

already the Danes, pagan through and through, were threatening the country with invasion. When this is borne in mind, the trembling anxiety, the sweeping censures, of the great churchmen can excite but little wonder. Moreover the condition of the Church itself was not reassuring. If the missionary zeal of the Anglo-Saxons was still unspent, and unnamed priests and deacons still passed over sea in numbers to die without memorial in the service of the Cross abroad, at home ecclesiastical abuses, such as Bede deplored in his famous letter, were everywhere to be encountered—the flagrant neglect of episcopal duties, the relaxation of monastic discipline, the endowment, under the guise of a religious purpose, of foundations which were religious only in name¹.

Nor was learning what it had been in England at large, though at York the greatest of English schools was rising into fame. It is doubtless impossible to accept the dictum of William of Malmesbury, that the grave of the national scholar, Bede, was the grave also of the national scholarship. That the love of letters was not even confined to York is plainly shown by the correspondence of Boniface with the nun Lioba, who eventually followed him to Germany, with the Kentish abbess Eatburga, with Daniel, Bishop of Winchester, Abbot Dud, and Egbert of York: and of Lul with 'Magister' Dealwin, Cynehard of Winchester, Ælbert (Koena) of York, and Cuthbert of Wearmouth, a correspondence which, while it incidentally illustrates the

¹ Cf. Bede, *Ep. cit.*, and the canons of Cloveshoo (1. 3—6. 8. 9. 22. and 25) and Pincahale (1 and 6).

eagerness with which the library of York was enlarged, proves also that the *scriptoria* of southern monasteries and nunneries were still active, and capable of producing beautiful manuscripts in the national hand.

Yet it remains true that, outside Northumbria at least, learning was beginning to decline. The Council of Cloveshoo lamented the prevailing neglect of careful scriptural study, and urged bishops, abbots, and abbesses to compel all under their rule to be diligent students¹, while insisting that priests should thoroughly know and understand the rites and offices of the Church, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Mass, and the Baptismal Service². And in later years Alcuin, in letters to his English friends, renewed with almost wearisome reiteration the same complaints, urging Æthelhard of Canterbury³, Eanbald II of York⁴, Æthelbert of Hexham⁵, and many other churchmen to apply themselves diligently to the study of Scripture, to educate young men and boys for the service of the Church, and to exhort their pupils to make haste to learn, while their powers were at their best, that they might the sooner be fitted themselves to take their share in the work of teaching.

¹ c. 7, 'His temporibus perpauci inveniuntur qui ex intimo corde sacrae scripturae rapiuntur amore; et vix aliquid elaborare in discendo voluerint: quin potius a juvenili aetate vanitatibus diversis, et inanis gloriae cupiditatibus occupantur: ...coherceantur et exerceantur in scholis pueri ad dilectionem sacrae scientiae ut per hoc bene eruditi inveniri possint ad omnimodam Ecclesiae Dei utilitatem.' The Anglo-Saxon laity apparently were eager to turn mere children to practical account at the earliest possible moment; the Council frowned upon this tendency, and would willingly have anticipated modern legislation and made education up to a fixed age compulsory, that there might 'never be wanting a succession of persons duly qualified for the service of God in Church' at least, if not in State.

² c. 10.

³ *Ep.* 128 [85].

⁴ *Ep.* 114 [72].

⁵ *Ep.* 31 [88], cf. *Ep.* 293 [221].

Disce ut doceas, the motto of his own life, was nowhere more needed than in his native land, and the decline of Christian learning, no less than of the Christian life, in England was the burden of nearly all the letters he sent home. The energy of the School of York did but throw into relief the surrounding apathy, and the best scholars even of York were soon to be occupied with the resuscitation of learning abroad rather than at home.

In the eighth century, then, to the devout Christian, England offered but a gloomy picture. The light was fading in almost every department of life. The 'coarse animalism and sluggish self-indulgence'¹ of the national temperament had regained the upper hand, and the Church had lost ground which it was never to recover in Anglo-Saxon days, the labours of Alfred and of Dunstan notwithstanding. Some powerful stimulus from without, some strong and purifying current of fresh influence, was imperatively needed to arrest, or even to retard, the rapid progress of decay. That stimulus was shortly given by disaster. England, from the Channel to the Tweed, was soon to ring with the cry: 'From the fury of the Northmen, good Lord, deliver us!' The swords, first of the Dane and then of the Norman, were to thrust home the lesson that a nation must reap what it has sown, and prove 'stern but effectual reminders that men cannot with impunity leave unfulfilled the duties to which God has called them'².

Meanwhile the School of York presented almost the only bright light in the picture, and here, as a boy,

¹ Trench, *Medieval Church History*, 42.

² *Id. ib.*

Alcuin became the pupil of Ælbert, Master of the School, and of its founder Egbert, Archbishop of York and brother of the reigning king. Treading in the footsteps of Bede, he proved an apt and willing pupil in every department of learning, and, like his model, was sedulous in taking part in all the offices of the Church¹. His fellow-students, jealous at first of his conspicuous ability, were won by his modesty and good-nature, while his industry and docility at once endeared him to his teachers. Egbert soon discerned his powers, and devoted special care to his instruction and spiritual direction, and he became the constant companion of Ælbert, visiting the Continent with him more than once, and so making his first acquaintance with 'Rome and the Kingdom of the Franks.' Thus from his earliest years he moved in a scholastic atmosphere, sharing the interests, the hopes and fears, of the Master, imbibing his ideas, and so forming that scholastic habit of mind and manner which clung to him through life². As he grew to manhood, he began to take his part in the task of imparting to others the knowledge he had himself acquired. In 766, when Archbishop Egbert died³ and Ælbert succeeded to the archbishopric⁴, an increased share in the conduct of the School fell, as a matter of course, to him, though the new Archbishop, like his

¹ The anonymous biographer has a curious tale of a nocturnal vision which terrified him into regular attendance at the night-hours. *Vit. Alc.*, c. 2.

² Cf. Theodulph, *Carm.* 27 (*M.G.H.*, *Poet. Carol. Aev.*, i. 491):
 Flaccus abit senior pueris comitatus ab urbe,
 Dum lux plena rediit tunc redit ipse domum.
 Ille habet aetatem, pro se respondeat ille,
 Pro se proque suis verba dabit pueris.

³ On November 19.

⁴ He was consecrated on April 24, 767.

predecessor, kept much of the religious teaching in his own hands; and the School of York was henceforward to a large extent identified with his name¹.

But the change involved no alteration in its tone. Alcuin, like Bede and Egbert and Ælbert, was an enthusiastic adherent of the Gregorian tradition, trained in the strictest orthodoxy, and zealous for the Roman rite². The catalogue of authors in the library at York, already cited, fairly represents the extent of his reading; and it is characteristic that he relied on Isidore and Bede in preference to Boethius and Cassiodorus, and to the complete exclusion of Martianus Capella, as the main sources of general information. It is indeed possible that he, like Bede, had Irish teachers³, but neither in his knowledge of Greek⁴ nor in any other respect are any traces of their influence discernible⁵.

¹ He was admitted to deacon's orders, 'posthaec...die purificationis sanctae Mariae' (*Vit. Alc.* 8) i.e., probably, in 767, just after receiving the tonsure;—he was never advanced to the priesthood, but remained to his dying day, in his own phrase, *humilis levita*.

² One of his closest friends, Sigulf, the *custos* of the cathedral, on whose recollections the *Vit. Alc.* is largely based, had as a boy learnt the Roman chant in the famous singing school at Metz, and the Roman rite in Rome itself. He followed Alcuin to the Continent, and succeeded him as Abbot of Ferrières. (Hauck, ii. 145, n. 4, translates *custos* as *Seelsorgepriester*, curate.)

³ Cf. Gardthausen, *Griechische Palæographie*, 428.

⁴ Its extent has been the subject of much debate, the Benedictines extolling, Hauréau, Lorenz, and others depreciating it. Hauck's view (ii. 134, n. 4), that 'he understood a certain amount of Greek, witness his citations from the Greek Testament and his occasional use of a Greek word, but his mistakes show that his knowledge was confined to a certain number of words, and that he was not certain of his grammar,' seems to be borne out by the facts. Perhaps the copies of the Greek Fathers at York were merely Latin translations. Cf. Mullinger, *op. cit.*, 80 ff. His knowledge of Hebrew was certainly scanty.

⁵ The view of Hyde (*op. cit.*, 206), Healy (*op. cit.*, 264 and 272), and perhaps Stokes (*The Knowledge of Greek*, &c., 196 ff.), that he learnt of Coleu at Clonmacnois, may surely be rejected. No passage

On the other hand, he delighted, at least in early days, in secular as well as sacred writers¹, and to the last he continued to quote Virgil and Ovid², Horace and Terence³. The composition of Latin verses, which, if their prosody is often inexact and their content seldom really poetic, are yet not infrequently characterised by a certain grace and pathos, was with him a favourite pastime⁴. The style of his Latin prose, which is simple and moulded on patristic lines, contrasts favourably with the stilted affectation of some among his contemporaries. Smooth, and sometimes almost eloquent, it earned for him in after times the title of 'the Erasmus of his age,' but it was often marred by grammatical blunders⁵ and made no pretence to rival, for example, the successful classicism of the Suetonian Einhard. He himself would now and then playfully depreciate his own *rusticitas*; and, in other departments of learning, his attainments, if uniformly respectable⁶, were also uniformly mediocre. In scholarship he was thus scarcely the equal of Bede, and yet, under his

in the *Vita* or the *Epistolae* contradicts the far more probable theory that they met only in Northumbria, where Alcuin certainly was when he wrote to Joseph the Scot, *Sanus est magister vester Colcu* (*Ep.* 8 [16]). The letter to Colcu himself contains nothing to show that he was in Ireland (see below, p. 65, n. 2), and his death was chronicled by the Northumbrian annalist.

¹ Even the *Vit. Alc.* (c. 2) admits (it is true, only to point a contrast) that at the age of ten he was *Virgilii amplius quam psalmorum amator*.

² Cf. e.g., *Epp.* 97 [54] and 225 [166].

³ It is a moot point whether his acquaintance with the last two was direct.

⁴ His poems number some hundreds, and are printed in *Mon. Germ. Hist. Poet. Carol. Aev.* i. But apart from the great poem on the Saints of York, which has a certain historical value, few call for special notice.

⁵ Cf. West, *Alcuin*, 184 n.

⁶ Of philosophy he knew scarcely anything.

guidance, the reputation of the School of York was distinctly enhanced. The reason is not far to seek. Whatever his personal deficiencies as a scholar—and after all, at least when judged by the standard of his own day, they were of no great moment—as a master he was second to none. Imbued with a passionate conviction of the dignity and sacredness of his calling, he possessed at the same time all the qualities which go to make the born teacher. His enthusiasm, tempered by patience, sought by a thousand ingenuities to evoke in his pupils a corresponding pleasure in their studies; his own natural delight in his task, consecrated by the assurance that he was fulfilling a mission, impelled him to the most scrupulous conscientiousness in its performance.

It was this, no doubt, that attracted students not only from all parts of England but even from beyond the seas. The Frisian Luidger, for example, a pupil of Abbot Gregory of Utrecht, coming in 767 to York with an Anglo-Saxon priest, Aluberht, who was to be consecrated a bishop by Ælbert, and one Sigbod, who was to be ordained priest, found an irresistible fascination in his teaching. After a year's stay he was obliged to return to Utrecht, but neither his parents nor Abbot Gregory enjoyed any peace till they had sanctioned a second visit to York. On this occasion he remained for three years and a half, leaving at last only because the murder of a young Saxon noble by a Frisian made it dangerous for any of his nation to remain in Northumbria¹. And from Ireland (unless he hailed from

¹ Alcuin, fearing that his love of learning might lead him to turn aside to 'some other city in that region,' and so fall into the hands

some Irish monastery in Great Britain) came Joseph the Scot, the pupil of Colcu of Clonmacnois.

Under Alcuin's rule, too, as in the days of Egbert, the library of York was a rich storehouse of learning on which the scholars of the Continent might freely draw. When Luidger finally left England he carried with him *copiam librorum*; and few perhaps of the Anglo-Saxons who were still flocking to the missionary fields where Boniface and Willibrord and Willihad laboured went to their work without at least two or three manuscripts written by English hands. Nor was Alcuin a whit less zealous than his master for the maintenance and enrichment of the library. In their journeys to the Continent before Ælbert became archbishop, master and pupil must have shared alike the delights and the disappointments of the book-collector; and though Ælbert's official duties made it impossible for him to take part in such expeditions any longer, Alcuin still continued from time to time to visit foreign countries and add to the riches of the York collection. In these journeys he came to know many scholars, Anglo-Saxon, Frankish, or Italian, filling posts of dignity and importance in the Frankish Church, or gathered together in the royal palace at Aachen to satisfy the literary yearnings of the Frankish king, and once at least he was sent by his master on a special mission to Charles the Great himself. A poem¹, which, from the names it mentions, must have been written between 777 and 782², reveals an acquaintance

of the avengers of blood, sent *diaconem* [sic] *suum nomine Putul* with him to see him safely across the Channel, and then proceed to Rome. *Vit. Luidgeri Altfredi*, c. xii.

¹ *Carm.* iv.

² Duemmler, *Neues Archiv*, xviii. 58.

with a wide circle of such friends: Albrich, Bishop of Utrecht; Riculf, Archbishop of Köln; Lul, Archbishop of Mainz; Bassinus, Bishop of Speier; Abbot Samuel of Epternach¹; Abbot Fulrad of St Denis; Prior Haddo of Utrecht; Paulinus of Aquileia; Peter of Pisa: Rado the Chancellor, and other members of the Frankish Court. Alcuin playfully bids his messenger beg for him the king's protection against the envious tongues of rival scholars; Charles had perhaps already shown signs of a preference for one so exactly suited to his purposes, and had attempted to draw him into his employ². In any case another journey, on this occasion to Rome, was soon to bring about a complete change in the character and purpose of his life.

In September, 778, after an archiepiscopate of twelve years, during which, with the active assistance of Alcuin and his friend and fellow-pupil Eanbald, Ælbert had effected such a restoration of the Minster as amounted almost to rebuilding it³, he resigned his see, intending to devote his remaining years to religious exercises. Eanbald succeeded to the archbishopric, but the direction of the School and the charge of the library passed into Alcuin's hands. Two years and two months later, on November 8, 780, ten days after the dedication of the newly restored Minster, in which both Eanbald and his predecessor took part, Ælbert died,

¹ The A.S. Bernerad or Beornrad, a pupil of Alcuin's at York, afterwards Archbishop of Sens: the *Vita Willibrordi* was dedicated to him. *Id. ib.*

² But the poem contains no hint that Alcuin expected to leave Northumbria.

³ See the description in *Versus de SS. Ebor. Eccles.*, 1506—1519.

leaving his precious library to its custodian¹, and the strongest tie which bound Alcuin to his home was broken. A venerated friend, whom he regarded almost as a prophet, had once revealed to him (so he himself declared in a letter written twenty years later) the divine purpose that he should serve God in the kingdom of the Franks. The prophecy (if indeed it was a prophecy) was now soon to find its fulfilment.

Eanbald I., the new Archbishop of York, desiring to receive his pall from Pope Hadrian, commissioned Alcuin to go to Rome to bring it. Alcuin willingly obeyed, and in March, 781, he had reached Parma on his homeward journey. But in that city (though not for the first time) he met Charles the Great, and the meeting proved the great turning-point of his life. Like Ælbert before him, he was now pressed to take service with a foreign prince, and the circumstances under which the offer was made must have rendered it far more attractive to him than it could ever have been to his master. Not chiefly, it may well be believed, because it was flattering, but because it proffered peace, and, with peace, the opportunity for fruitful work such as at home, in the then state of Northumbria, seemed impossible.

The age in England was an age of decline; in France it was an age of revival. At home religion and letters were struggling with failing powers against pagan superstition, anarchy, and crime; abroad both were supported by the full strength of the strongest king in Europe. At York Alcuin might indeed have

¹ *Ep.* 114 [72], 'thesauris sapientiae in quibus me magister meus dilectus Aelbertus archiepiscopus heredem reliquit.'

pupils, but at Aachen he would also have fellow-scholars, Franks or Italians, with aims and interests like his own. In Northumbria the crown was often degraded by the weakness or wickedness of those who wore it; in France he would have for his patron a king deservedly called 'great,' whose policy and personality alike he could respect. Yet he hesitated. His love for York was strong, his sense of duty urgent. In the end he would entertain the proposal only subject to the concurrence of the Northumbrian king and Archbishop Eanbald. Their consent was obtained, Eanbald however stipulating that the migration should not be understood to be final, a condition which was readily accepted.

In the following year, therefore, according to the accepted reckoning, Alcuin returned to France and entered the service of Charles the Great. He became first the Master of the Palace School, which under his leading gained a reputation such as it had never known before. The young princes and their sisters, at this time mere children, were his pupils, and with them were the sons of many nobles who realised that the days of promotion for the unlettered, however otherwise meritorious, were over and past. But grown men and women also learnt of him, Angilbert and Adalhard, Wala and Gundrada, Charles' sister Gisela, Abbess of Chelles, and Liutgarde, afterwards his third Queen; and, most important of all, when war and politics left any time for study, Charles himself¹.

¹ Englishmen and Scots, Witto and Sigulf, Fredegis and Joseph the Scot, were probably assistant teachers as well as learners at the Palace School (Witto came to France in 793, Fredegis apparently in the same year or later); Einhard and Riculf of Mainz were also

In true Anglo-Saxon fashion the Master gave his pupils scriptural or classical names. Charles became 'David,' Pippin 'Julius,' Gisela the elder 'Lucia,' her niece and namesake 'Delia,' Rotrud 'Columba,' Adalhard 'Antonius,' Wala 'Arsenius,' Gundrada 'Eulalia,' Einhard 'Bezaleel,' Angilbert 'Homer,' Riculf¹ 'Flavius Damoetas,' Ricbod² 'Macharius,' Witto 'Candidus,' Fredegis 'Nathanael,' and Alcuin himself 'Flaccus Albinus.' The practice perhaps served undesignedly the useful purpose of cancelling for the time the social distinctions between the various members of the School, while they were occupied in the common pursuit of learning³. And learning was pursued by young and old alike with eager delight. The Master—always reminding them that, as earthly happiness was but transitory, and wisdom the only true ornament of the soul, so in its turn secular learning was but the stepping stone to higher things—initiated his younger pupils in the seven liberal arts, 'the seven pillars' or 'steps of wisdom,' through which, by patient and persevering study, they might eventually arrive at the power of understanding the Holy Scriptures. Sometimes Charles himself would be a listener to these lessons, putting questions as to the nature and value of Rhetoric, or drinking in all that Alcuin could tell him of the motions and courses of the sun and moon

among its members: these, and such as these, formed the so-called 'Academy.'

¹ Archbishop of Mainz, 787.

² Abbot of Lorsch, 784: Archbishop of Trier, 791: d. 804.

³ Mühlbacher, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 243; cf. Werner, *op. cit.*, 22. But the custom was not confined to the school. In Alcuin's letters Arno of Salzburg, e.g., appears as Aquila, Theodulph of Orleans as Pindar, Higbald of Lindisfarne as Speratus, the priests Hechstán and Monna as *Alta Petra* and *Anthropon* respectively.

and stars. The tedium of learning was relieved from time to time by arithmetical puzzles, or exercises in whimsical definition, such as compose the *Propositiones Alcuini*¹, or the more certainly genuine *Disputatio Pippini cum Albino Scholastico*², or by essays in the art of writing verses, serious or satirical, sacred or profane, epitaph and epigram, riddle and acrostic³. The more advanced pupils were doubtless further invited to study the problems of theology, or to display a devout ingenuity in discriminating the triple meaning of the Scriptures.

It was probably in these years that Alcuin came to know and love Arno, Abbot from 782 onwards of St Amand's monastery at Elnon, to whom the preservation of so much of his correspondence is due; for as early as 785, possibly at Alcuin's own suggestion, Arno was promoted to the bishopric of Salzburg. Alcuin's letters to him, beginning a few years later and extending almost to the day of his death, far exceed in number those addressed to any other correspondent, and reveal to the full the warm affectionateness of the writer's character, and the pathetic devotion with which he clung to a nature congenial yet stronger than his own⁴.

¹ If this is not Alcuin's, it no doubt represents one phase of his teaching, resembling in its laboured solutions of simple problems the 'Propositions' of his favourite model Bede.

² Cf. Masius, *Die Erziehung im Mittelalter*, 169 seqq. Pearson's denial of its genuineness (*History of England*, i. 308) seems to lack solid foundation.

³ Masius (*op. cit.*, 150) remarks that at Aachen, 'wie in England, wurde ganz besonderes Gewicht auf metrische Fertigkeit und mathematisch-astronomische Kenntnisse, auf Gesang und Musik gelegt,' while Carm. xxvi. seems to show that the study of medicine was not entirely neglected.

⁴ Cf. Zeissberg, *Alkuin und Arno*, passim.

About the same time, perhaps, he came into contact with two men of widely different temperaments and aims, Theodulph of Orleans, one of Charles' ablest and heartiest supporters in the work of reviving education, and Benedict of Aniane, the apostle and restorer of monastic rigour and discipline.

But of the details of his life at this time nothing certain is known¹. Few, if any, of the letters now extant can be assigned to so early a date; perhaps his correspondence was not as yet treasured as a model of the epistolary art. An epitaph on Abbot Fulrad of St Denis, who died in July, 784, affords no help; but it is not unlikely that the *Vita S. Willibrordi* was written between 782 and 786, and, if so, Alcuin was probably at the time an inmate of Willibrord's monastery of Epternach². And perhaps here he met his countryman Willihad, who, having fled from Wigmodia on the Saxon rising in 782, and returned in 785, as soon as peace was restored, would seem to have persuaded him to engage for a time in missionary work among the Saxons. For, in a letter written in the autumn of 789, but before he had received the news of Willihad's death on November 8, he expressed a keen regret that they had ever parted, and a desire to see Willihad once more and end his days with him *in peregrinatione*³.

¹ Cf. Monod, *Études*, 46, 'Pour les années...entre les deux campagnes de Charlemagne de 781 et de 787, on n'a que peu de traces de son séjour dans le Nord.' He holds that Alcuin must have been in Italy at some time between 781 and 787, because he calls Pippin 'his spiritual son.' For this however there is very little evidence.

² Cf. Hüffer (*Korveier Studien*, 167 seqq.), who, in discussing Alcuin's whereabouts when he wrote the biography, comes to the same conclusion as Jaffé and Duemmler, though on different grounds.

³ *Ep.* 13 [216], 'Saluta millies dilectissimum meum Vilhaed

Charles meanwhile was engaged in yearly struggles with the Saxons. The massacre of Verden in 782, the campaign of 783 which drove their leader Widukind into exile, failed to break their spirit, and in 784 they were again in arms. Another campaign, however, followed by the establishment of the Frankish winter-quarters in Saxony, brought about a change. In 785 the ringleaders of the rebels, Abbio and Widukind, resolved to make their submission. When the conqueror was Charles, who, like his grandfather Pippin, saw in the paganism of his subjects a standing menace to his rule, submission could take but one form. At Attigny therefore, perhaps on Christmas Day, 785, the two chiefs, swearing fealty to the Frankish king, sealed the compact by accepting the Frankish faith, Charles himself standing godfather to Widukind. The policy of enforcing conversion by the sword seemed triumphant, and at Charles' request Pope Hadrian appointed three days of public thanksgiving for the triumph—the 23rd, 26th, and 28th of June, 786—to be observed throughout the West of Europe. But Alcuin probably was not on the Continent to witness this celebration; perhaps

episcopum. Multum me poenitet, quod recessi ab eo. Utinam videam eum, et sit cursus vitae meae consummatus in peregrinatione.' Hüffer, *op. cit.*, 155 seqq., holds that Alcuin co-operated with Willibad in his missionary labours. He identifies the *N. abbas* to whom the letter is addressed with one Suitbert, Bishop of Verden, whose appointment to the see of Verden is described, in a much suspected diploma of 29 June, 786, as being made 'praecepto Adriani neenon Mogunciensis Archiepiscopi Lullonis...et Alequini insignis praedicatoris rationis consilio,' and who is perhaps referred to in fol. 35 of the *Liber Vitae Dunelmensis*, where these names are given: 'Gervald, Bilhaeth (sc. Vilhaed, Hüffer), Suidberet.' But cf. Hauck, ii. 391, n. 1: 'Da dem Bischof Suidberet gleichzeitige Zeugnisse völlig fehlen, so wird man darauf verzichten müssen, in ihm eine historische Person zu sehen.'

he did not fully share the king's delight, for in later years he severely criticised his Saxon policy¹. At any rate he appears in England in the course of 786 as one of the two commissioners of the Northumbrian king and the Archbishop of York² who accompanied the Papal Legate, George Bishop of Ostia, after the Synod of Pincanhale, to Mercia. There, in the 'contentious synod' of Cealcyth, the decrees of Pincanhale were confirmed, and the final arrangements were also made for the creation of a third English archbishopric at Lichfield³. It is quite uncertain how long he had been in England. Charles' official representative in the legate's train was *Wigbod, Abbas et Presbyter*, and the letter from Charles to Offa announcing the conversion of Widukind is now condemned as a forgery, so that Alcuin cannot have been its bearer. He may possibly have taken some part in drafting the decrees of Pincanhale, which quoted Virgil and Prudentius⁴,

¹ Hauck (ii. 386, n. 1) prefers 787 to 785 as the date of the *Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae* in which that policy was announced.

² *Ep.* 3 [10] (report of the Legate George to Pope Hadrian), 'His namque peractis et data benedictione perreximus, adsumptis nobiscum viris inlustribus, legatis regis et archiepiscopi, Alquinum videlicet et Pyttel lectores [=magistros]. Qui una nobiscum pergentes et ipsa decreta secum deferentes,' &c. Cf. as to Pyttel *Vit. Luidgeri*, i. c. 12, 'qui etiam postea cum Alchuino venit in Galliam in ordine presbyteri.' Jaffé, following the Centuriators, read *Maluinum* instead of *Alquinum*.

³ This business was the chief object of the legates' visit to England. Offa, accepting the triple division of the country into Mercia, Northumbria, and Wessex, and devoting himself in the main to the consolidation rather than the extension of his territory, desired to make his own realm ecclesiastically independent by establishing a Mercian Archbishopric. The Archbishop of Canterbury, needless to say, opposed the plan, so did Hadrian I.; but Offa, through Charles, overcame the papal reluctance, and at Cealcyth (perhaps Chelsea) accordingly 'Archbishop Jaenberht gave up some portion of his archbishopric, and Higebright (Bishop of Lichfield) was elected (Archbishop) by King Offa, and Egferth (Offa's son) was hallowed king.'

⁴ Duemmler, *Neues Archiv*, xviii. 63.

and found a curiously faithful echo in one of his own letters written seven years later¹. But this is mere conjecture, nor are there any means of knowing how long he remained in England². He may have journeyed with the legates to the Frankish realm, or he may have returned to Northumbria and witnessed, perhaps, the outbreak of anarchy in September, 788, when the weary tale of murders and conspiracies began again with the assassination of Alfwald.

The *Admonitio Generalis* of March 23, 789³, however, seems to reveal his influence, and in a letter to an unnamed abbot in Saxony⁴ he alludes to the summer campaign of that year, in which Charles marched with his accustomed success against a Slavonic tribe which had been harassing the frontier. But in any case his second stay in France was brief. Negotiations set on foot by Charles for the marriage of his son and namesake with one of Offa's daughters had emboldened the Mercian king to propose as a condition a counter match between his son Ecgfrith and Charles' daughter Bertha, a suggestion which so affronted Frankish pride that friendly relations between the two sovereigns were

¹ *Ep.* 16 [22], 'Ecce tonsura quam in barbis et in capillis paganis adsimilare voluistis.' Cf. *supra*, p. 46.

² The earliest of the letters still preserved throw no light upon the question. *Ep.* 2 [7], sympathising with the troubles of Leutfred, Bishop of Mayo, must have been written before 786, when his successor Adulf was consecrated; the name of the bearer, 'brother Benedict,' seems to connect it with *Ep.* 1 [8], approving a friend's resolution to become a monk, but warning him that even in a monastery he will find evil. *Ep.* 3 [10] to Riculf, may perhaps be assigned to 787, for in that year he succeeded Lul in the see of Mainz, and the letter exhorts him to live up to the standard of his predecessors. But there is nothing to show whether it was written in England or abroad.

³ See below, chapter ix.

⁴ *Ep.* 6 [13].

forthwith suspended¹. Writing to the Scottish teacher Colcu², apparently early in 790, Alcuin reported a rumour that he was himself to be sent to Mercia as a mediator; and in another letter to a priest called Beornwin³, which perhaps belongs to the same date, he stoutly denied that he had ever been wanting in fidelity to Offa and his fellow-countrymen⁴. The rumour proved correct, and he came to England, but apparently without much result, since the breach

¹ The Annals of Fontenelle credit Abbot Gervold of S. Josse with having prevented the execution of the 'non-intercourse act,' but Alcuin speaks of it as being actually in force. Werner suggests that it was reenacted in consequence of Charles' protection of Egbert of Wessex.

² *Ep.* 7 [14], 'Sed nescio quid de nobis venturum fiet. Aliquid enim dissensionis, diabolico fomento inflammante, nuper inter regem Karolum et regem Offan exortum est ita ut utrumque navigatio interdicta negotiantibus cessat. Sunt qui dicunt nos pro pace esse in illas partes mittendos.' Sickel (*Alcuinstudien*, 524, n. i.) argues that it was written in England. But (i.) the oil which Alcuin sends for the bishops is said to be scarce in Britain, not in Ireland; (ii.) all his news (recounting with some exaggeration Charles' victories over Saxons, Wends, Avars, Greeks, and Saracens) is Frankish; (iii.) he sends alms on Charles' behalf, and asks for prayers for himself and Charles only, for no Englishmen; (iv.) he speaks of Joseph, Colcu's *vernaculus*, as if he were with him, and Joseph (cf. *Ep.* 8 [16]) was apparently in France. Cf. Duemmler, *N. Archiv*, xviii., 64. Healy, Hyde, and Stokes (*opp. cit.*) cite the letter to prove the existence of direct intercourse between France and Ireland. But Colcu was probably in Northumbria, communication with which would be unaffected by Charles' quarrel with Offa.

³ *Ep.* 82 [15], dated by Jaffé, and apparently by Duemmler (in *Neues Archiv*, xviii. 64), early in 790. In *M.G.H. Epp.* iv. Duemmler prefers 793—796, because Alcuin refers to England as the fatherland which he had left. But he was no more likely to use this expression in 793—796 than in 790; he did not decide to remain abroad till he heard of Æthelred's murder, April 18, 796, Offa died in July of that year, and there are no grounds for placing the letter between those two dates. Hüffer, *op. cit.*, argues, on the assumption (a) that Colcu was in Ireland, (b) that *Ep.* 82 is rightly dated 793—796, that Alcuin was in England continuously from 786 to 793; but as neither of these assumptions can be regarded as proved, it seems rash to reject the accepted account of his two visits to England after 782.

⁴ 'Sicut hos amicos, quos mihi Deus donavit, fideliter quantum valeo servabo, sic et hos, quos reliqui in patria.'

between Charles and Offa is mentioned again in a later letter.

Nor were things prospering in Northumbria. Osred had reigned little more than a year when he was driven into exile, and Æthelred, son of Æthelwald Moll, appeared once more upon the scene, and regained the crown which he had lost twelve years before. Alcuin hoped much from the change, and delayed his return to France that he might help in restoring order¹. But he was soon undeceived. The character of the new King, he wrote to Adalhard of Corbie², was by no means what he had hoped and expected. Æthelred indeed was proving himself a bloodthirsty ruffian. Osred was out of his reach for the moment, but the two sons of Alfwald were enticed out of sanctuary by his orders, and drowned in Windermere. Alcuin and his friends endeavoured in vain to restrain his savage impulses. The High Reeve Eadwulf was sent to execution, and owed his life, it would seem, only to the clumsiness of the executioner. Public indignation ran so high that Osred was emboldened to leave his hiding-place in the Isle of Man, and make an attempt to recover the crown.

¹ *Ep.* 8 [16], to Joseph the Scot, then apparently acting as his steward, directs him to send money, wine, clothing, and paints to England, gives him instructions as to alms and presents, and the assistance to be afforded to Berdict, a messenger then on his way to Rome, and informs him that his master Colcu and his friends *qui apud nos sunt* are well. *Ep.* 10 [18], to Arno, explains that the change of dynasty, *novitas regni nostri*, will detain the writer in Northumbria till the following year.

² *Ep.* 9 [17], promising that Adalhard shall see or hear of him next year, as he expects to be sent (to Charles, apparently) on a mission in the interests of peace; and asking for information as to the cause of the dissensions *inter olim amicos*, *i.e.*, presumably, Charles and Offa. Greetings to Angilbert, *nunc ex filio patri*, seem to refer to his appointment as Abbot of St Riquier.

But he was quickly captured and slain, and Æthelred strengthened his own position by a marriage with Offa's daughter Ælfled.

Meantime the misunderstanding between Offa and Charles continued to trouble Alcuin, who seems to have been engaged in endeavours to effect a reconciliation, whether successfully or not does not appear¹. And, if Simeon of Durham may be believed, the year 792 brought him yet another commission from the Frankish King, the refutation on the authority of Scripture of the decrees in favour of image worship recently passed by the Council of Nicaea², his work taking the form of a letter addressed to Charles in the name of the Bishops and Princes of Britain. It was apparently his sense of a special call to fight the battle of the faith against heretics of every kind which now decided him to leave his country once more and put himself completely at the disposal of Charles. 'My master,' he once wrote³, 'gave me this command, that if I should hear of new sects arising anywhere, and teaching things contrary to

¹ Cf. *Ep.* 14 [20], to Joseph the Scot: 'Adhuc dubio stamine pacis subtegmine causa textitur, et dum plenum perficitur vestimentum, mox ad induendum vestrae dirigetur fraternitati.' Alcuin was perhaps at the Mercian court, but the date of the letter is not certain: Duemmler suggests c. 790—793.

² 'Anno D.C.C.XCII. Karolus Rex Francorum misit sinodalem librum ad Britanniam sibi a Constantinopoli directum; in quo libro, heu, proh dolor! multa inconvenientia et verae fidei contraria reperientes, maxime quod pene omnium orientalium doctorum non minus quam trecentorum vel eo amplius Episcoporum unanima assertione confirmantur imagines adorare debere, quod omnino ecclesia Dei execratur. Contra quod scripsit Albinus epistolam ex autoritate Divinarum scripturarum mirabiliter affirmatam, illamque cum eodem libro, et persona Episcoporum ac Principum nostrorum Regi Francorum attulit.' Lingard and other Roman Catholic writers reject the story as a twelfth century fable, but Haddan and Stubbs, iii. 469, rightly vindicate its authenticity.

³ *Ep.* 200 [140].

the doctrine of the Apostles, I should forthwith devote my whole strength to the defence of the Catholic Faith.' And now, with the Council of Nicaea proclaiming Iconoduly in the East, and Felix and Elipandus preaching Adoptionism in the West, the call had come, and without hesitation he obeyed it. In the spring of 793¹ he left the English shores, never, though then he knew it not, to visit them again².

¹ He was in Northumbria in Lent (cf. *Ep.* 16 [22]: Easter fell on April 7), but had left before June 8.

² Perhaps his last letter written from England is one (*Ep.* 15 [21]) to Gisela, Abbess of Chelles, asking her prayers for a prosperous voyage, that he may see her face once more. It seems doubtful whether Duemmler and Sickel are right in dating *Ep.* 13 [216], to Ricbod of Trier, c. 791-2, since Alcuin there complains of having received neither letter nor visit for a year, and even if he wrote early in 791 that year must have been spent chiefly in England, where a visit was impossible, while, if *exaltatio saeculi* refers to Ricbod's appointment to the see of Trier, as they maintain, he must have written after Nov. 791, when (Abel u. Simson, *Jahrbücher*, ii. 20) Ricbod's predecessor died.

CHAPTER VI.

ALCUIN'S LIFE: A.D. 793—796.

ALCUIN had scarcely reached the Frankish shores when he heard tidings of an appalling disaster to the Church of Lindisfarne. On June 8, 793, the monastery was sacked by a band of marauding Norsemen¹. The calamity thrilled through all the Anglo-Saxon world. Alcuin sent home letter after letter on the subject, addressing himself in prose and verse, in a strain of mingled sympathy and admonition, to King Æthelred and his nobles², to Archbishop Æthelhard of Canterbury³, to the monks of Wearmouth and Jarrow⁴, and to the Bishop of desolated Lindisfarne itself⁵. For three hundred and fifty years, he said, the Anglo-Saxons had dwelt in Britain, nor had they ever had reason to apprehend so awful a visitation. If the great Cuthbert was thus unable to defend his own Church from sacrilege small confidence could be felt elsewhere. And yet there was a way in which perhaps further

¹ If the *Winchester Chronicle* may be believed, the Norsemen had first set foot in England six years before. Cf. Sir James Ramsay, *Foundations of England*, i. 230.

² *Epp.* 16 [22] and 18 [23].

³ *Ep.* 17 [28].

⁴ *Ep.* 19 [27].

⁵ *Epp.* 20 [24] and 21 [25].

disaster might be escaped. Gildas had acknowledged in the Anglo-Saxon invasion the punishment of British sinfulness, now in the like circumstances let that solemn warning be laid to heart. Luxury, intemperance, and immorality had of late years polluted all Northumbria; and now the sack of Lindisfarne came as a challenge to each and every class to shake off the yoke of sin while they struggled to evade the yoke of the invader. If King and bishop, monk and judge, emulated each other in the faithful discharge of their respective functions and in the purity of their example to the people, if the young were eager to learn, that in maturer years they too might bear their part in the instruction of others¹, perhaps the terror of the Norsemen might after all prove but a passing shadow, and evils greater even than the sack of Lindisfarne might be averted². Meanwhile his own exertions should be devoted to securing the good offices of Charles on behalf of the prisoners in the pirates' hands³.

His hope that the catastrophe of Lindisfarne might stand alone was not to be fulfilled. In the very next year the monastery of Jarrow was sacked, and in 797 he had fresh reason to bewail the 'pagan ravages' in his native country⁴. But meanwhile a double task, which had been perhaps the principal cause of his final determination to leave Northumbrian affairs to right themselves⁵, engaged his energies.

¹ *Ep.* 19 [27].

² *Ep.* 20 [24].

³ *Ep.* 22 [26], to the priest Cudrad, who had escaped from captivity.

⁴ *Ep.* 129 [86].

⁵ *Ep.* 43 [35], 'Franciam veni.....ecclesiasticae causa necessitatis, et ad confirmandam catholicae fidei rationem.'

No feature was more characteristic of the Carolingian system than the claim of Charles, as the 'steersman' of the Frankish Church, to be its protector at once against the open attacks of the infidel without, and against the covert machinations of the heretic and schismatic within¹. And recent events in East and West had made it incumbent on him to realise that claim in action.

Leo IV., the third of the Iconoclast emperors, had died in 780. The crown had passed to his son Constantine VI., a mere child, the substance of power to his widow, the Empress Irene, who as regent had at once assumed the reins of government. His death had been the signal for a complete reversal of his ecclesiastical policy.

Irene, actuated perhaps not less by considerations of political expediency than by personal conviction², threw herself into the arms of the Iconodules, and on the opportune resignation of the Patriarch Paul, under circumstances well calculated to further her designs, appointed one of their most bigoted leaders, Tarasius, to the Patriarchate. With the aid of this new ally she now determined to rehabilitate Iconoduly by the decision of a General Council; and such a Council was accordingly summoned to meet at Constantinople in August, 786. The strong iconoclastic sentiments of the army, however, compelled an adjournment to Nicaea. There

¹ Cf. *Ep.* 93 [Jaffé, *Monumenta Carolina*, 354], from the King to Leo III.: 'Nostrum est secundum auxilium divinae pietatis sanctam undique Christi ecclesiam ab incursu paganorum et ab infidelium devastatione armis defendere foris, et intus catholicae fidei agnitione munire. Vestrum est...elevatis ad Deum cum Moyse manibus nostram adjuvare militiam....'

² Cf. Hauck, ii. 311.

the Seventh General Council, attended by three hundred and fifty bishops and sanctioned by the presence of two Papal Legates, sat from September 24 to October 13, 787¹, rejected the iconoclastic decrees of the Council of 753, and once more prescribed the worship of images, but with a distinction between *προσκύνησις*, which might be paid to representations of the Saviour and the Saints, and *λατρεία*, which was due to God alone.

Irene was triumphant, but the victory was incomplete. Two obstacles still remained to the restoration of real harmony between East and West. One was the reluctance of the Byzantine Court itself to accede to the demands of Pope Hadrian, who in accepting Irene's invitation to the Council had claimed his old jurisdiction over the Illyrian and South Italian dioceses, as well as the restoration of the 'patrimones' which had been sequestered by Leo the Isaurian. He was eager to welcome the conversion of the Emperor, he even dreamt perhaps of a Greek alliance as some counterpoise to the overwhelming power of the Frank; but the acceptance of these demands was for him an indispensable preliminary to any satisfactory settlement². The other obstacle was the resentment which the proceedings at Nicaea had aroused in the mind of Charles the Great.

The Frankish Church, so far as it had taken any part in the movement, had probably hitherto followed the papal lead³. But Charles himself, and the divines by whom he was surrounded, adopted an attitude of

¹ 24 Sept.—13 Oct. at Nicaea, 23 Oct. at Constantinople.

² He held up Charles, who had 'restored to St Peter' so much that the Lombard Kings had seized, as an example for the Emperor to follow.

³ Hauck, ii. 310, n. 3.

greater independence ; images, they held, were things indifferent, which no one was bound either to worship or to destroy ; the teaching of the Iconodules was superstitious, even idolatrous, though the excesses of Iconoclasm were not the less to be deplored.

With the object of Irene's policy, therefore, Charles could feel no sympathy, while the means by which she sought to attain it roused his deepest anger. For in her invitations to the Council, regarding the Frankish Church as a mere division of the Roman patriarchate, she had ignored both its prelates and its patron, the Frankish King. Jealous at all times of any infringement of his prerogative, Charles was furious at an omission which amounted, in his opinion, to a denial of his political importance. His rage found vent in a counter denial. A Council at which the King and the Church of the Franks were unrepresented could be no true 'General Council'; to all but its promoters it must be a mere provincial synod *in partibus Græciæ*. It was therefore with the most unfavourable prepossessions that he eventually received a Latin translation of the Acts of the Council¹, nor were those prepossessions dissipated when he read the document. Arrogance, to his mind, had been the keynote of the proceedings at

¹ The date is uncertain. Hauck (ii. 314, n. 2) gives grounds for rejecting the idea that Hadrian had the translation prepared and sent it to Charles: the Pope indeed seems to have concealed the whole affair as far as possible from his too powerful friend, cf. *ib.* 312, 313. The gross inaccuracies of the translation have led to the surmise that it was concocted by the Iconoclasts at Constantinople for the purpose of securing sympathy in the West, and sent by them to Charles; the distinction between *προσκύνησις* and *λατρεία*, on which the Council had insisted, being intentionally ignored. Hampe, however (*Neues Archiv*, xxi. 86 seqq.), holds that Hadrian's own copy of the translation was equally faulty, and in the same respects.

Nicaea, and that arrogance he was determined to repress. The Council, for him, was neither orthodox nor authoritative; he would repudiate alike its teaching and its claims. He and his divines objected both to the form and to the substance of the conciliar decrees¹, to the blasphemous arrogance of the imperial style², and to the interference of Irene, as a woman, in ecclesiastical affairs, as well as to the doctrine laid down with regard to image worship and other matters. Their objections were formulated at great length, and with an air of vast superiority to the childish 'ignorance, arrogance, superstition, and absurdity' of the Greeks, in the four *Libri Carolini*³, which, published in the King's name, proclaimed to all the world the rejection of the Nicene doctrine by the greatest Church of the West⁴.

But Charles' aims did not stop here. The aid of the neighbouring Anglo-Saxon Church must also be invoked to defeat the heresies of Nicaea, and accordingly the Acts of the Council were forwarded to Alcuin,

¹ Cf. Hauck, ii. 321: 'Sie waren geneigt, jedes Wort zu bestreiten.'

² E.g. 'Rogamus tuam paternitatem et maxime Deus rogat' (*Lib. i. 4*). 'Per eum qui conregnat nobis Deus' (*Ib. 1*).

³ They condemned formally both the Iconoclastic Council of Constantinople, 753, and the Iconodulic Council of Nicaea, 787, but it was against the latter only that they were in fact directed. They are full of errors, imputing to the Council of Nicaea doctrines which it never professed and condemning it for holding them, but it is possible that much of the blame should really fall on the inaccurate Latin translation employed by the compilers.

⁴ The authorship is uncertain; probably the work was the result of the cooperation of several scholars; whether Alcuin, directly or indirectly, had any share in it cannot be decided, but the contrast between its self-confident tone and his habitual humility and complaisance makes it incredible at least that he was editor-in-chief. And during the greater part of the period within which it must have been taken in hand (Sept. 789—Sept. 791: cf. Hampe, *loc. cit.*) he was in England.

then in Northumbria, that he might draw up a refutation of the conciliar teaching, and bring it with him backed by the authority of the Princes and Bishops of his country¹. And even then one more step remained to be taken. If possible the Pope must be induced to join in the protest of the West against the arrogant assumptions of the East. And so the leading objections were roughly tabulated in the form of a Capitulary of eighty-five *Reprehensiones*, which was forwarded to Hadrian by the hand of Angilbert, with the request that he would formulate out of the materials thus provided an authoritative refutation, on the part of Western Christendom, of the erroneous teaching of Nicaea². But for once Charles had miscalculated. Hadrian, whose predecessors had broken with the East in the cause of image worship, who had himself welcomed the conversion of Constantine and Irene and sanctioned the proceedings at Nicaea by the presence of his legates, was alike unwilling and unable to accede to his request. Instead of refuting the Nicene decrees he refuted Charles' objections to them, formulating a *responsio* to every *reprehensio*, and thus, while disclaiming all desire to defend particular persons or to espouse the cause of anything smaller than the Catholic Church itself, constituting himself the uncompromising and un-discriminating champion in every detail of the Council

¹ In 792, according to Simeon of Durham, cf. *supra*, p. 67. n. 2.

² The order of the *Reprehensiones*, which are known only through Hadrian's reply, has been ingeniously restored by Hampe, *loc. cit.* He holds that they were rough notes, jotted down by the Frankish divines as they read the Acts, which were elaborated into the *Libri Carolini* on Hadrian's refusing to act as Charles desired. Against this view see Hauck, ii. 315, n. 1. The generally accepted date for Angilbert's embassy is 792 : Hampe prefers 791.

and its supporters¹. Like Balaam, being called to curse, he blessed altogether. Yet, unwilling to break with Charles, he found a way of escape in an ingenious if imaginary distinction between the sound opinions of the King himself and the erroneous views of his advisers. The Frankish divines, he suggested, were undoubtedly responsible for the great body of the *reprehensiones*, but Charles, and none other, must be credited with the last chapter of the Capitulary. And with that chapter, which cited the letter of Gregory the Great to Serenus, the iconoclastic Bishop of Marseilles, as containing the true exposition of the Church's mind on image-worship², both he himself and the recent Council were in entire agreement. Moreover—and here the traditional policy of the Roman see appeared—he suspected that the repentance of the Greeks was incomplete. For no reply had been vouchsafed to his demand for the sequestered 'patrimonies' and the original jurisdiction of his see. He intended therefore, if Charles approved, to couple his thanks for the restoration of images with a repetition of his claim, and to threaten the Emperor, in case of obduracy, with condemnation as a heretic. For, as he observed with singular inaptitude, *plus cupimus salutem animarum et rectae fidei stabilitatem conservare, quam hujusmodi habitum mundi possidere*³.

The suggestion may have relieved Charles from the

¹ Perhaps the inclusion among the passages condemned as 'ignorant, vain, and absurd' of certain extracts from his own letter to Constantine and Irene sharpened his zeal in their defence! Cf. Hauck, ii. 326, n. 4.

² 'Adorare [images] nequaquam cogimus qui noluerint. Frangere vel destruere eas, etiamsi quis voluerit, non permittimus.'

³ For different estimates of his conduct cf. Hauck and Hampe *in loc.*

fear, if he had any, of a hostile understanding between the Papacy and the Empire; it can hardly have enhanced his respect for the Pope. But the result of the correspondence remains a mystery. Perhaps the blank in the *Codex Carolinus* between 791 and the death of Hadrian is significant. Perhaps Charles was unwilling to perpetuate the memory of a dispute on so important a matter. All that is certain is that the condemnation which the Pope had refused to decree was pronounced with all solemnity at the Synod which met at Frankfort on June 1, 794, and that at that Synod two papal Legates were present.

Charles had been thwarted in his first attempt to procure the formal rejection of the Nicene decrees by the united voice of Western Christendom. But at Frankfort he may be said to have achieved his purpose. For there were represented the Churches of France and Italy and Britain and Galicia: Paulinus of Aquileia and Peter of Milan, with their suffragans, flanking the deep array of Frankish clergy: Alcuin¹ and other Anglo-Saxons representing the learning and authority of their communion: and the papal Legates giving to the Synod by their presence the sanction of the Pope himself. And there the proceedings of the Council of 787 were solemnly repudiated, and the practice of image worship condemned². Perhaps the Legates sheltered

¹ *Synodus Francofurtensis*, c. 56. *M. G. H. Leg. Sect. ii. i. 78*. 'Commonuit [rex] etiam ut Aliquinum ipsa sancta synodus in suo consortio sive in orationibus recipere dignaretur, eo quod esset vir in ecclesiasticis doctrinis eruditus. Omnis namque synodus secundum ammonitionem domini regis consensit et eum in eorum consortio sive in orationibus receperunt.'

² § 2, *id. ib.* 73. 'Allata est in medio questio de nova Grecorum synodo, quam de adorandis imaginibus Constantinopolitim fecerunt, in qua scriptum habebatur, ut qui imagines sanctorum, ita ut deificam

themselves behind a verbal quibble, for the thesis which the divines at Frankfort imputed to the Council of Nicaea, and then condemned it for holding, not only disregarded the essential distinction which had been drawn by it between *προσκύνησις* and *λατρεία*, but, in its anathematisation of all who would not worship images, represented not the official decision of the Council itself, but merely the irresponsible opinion of one of its members. And perhaps the whole subject was introduced without any previous warning to the Pope or his representatives, for there was another matter of great importance which formed, ostensibly at least, the chief reason for the meeting of the Synod¹.

trinitatem, servitio aut adorationem non inpeuderent, anathema judicaverunt. Qui supra sanctissimi nostri omnimodis adorationem et servitium rennuentes contempserunt atque consentientes condemnauerunt.¹

¹ Charles apparently pursued the subject no further, perhaps because soon afterwards he resumed the diplomatic relations with the Byzantine Court which had been broken off in the winter of 786-7. The *Libri Carolini*, with their scorn of the Greek pretensions, their refusal to Constantine of any higher title than King, their repudiation of his claim to represent the Roman Empire (which indeed, after all, was merely the Fourth Beast of the Book of Daniel!) were instinct with political *animus*; and Charles' whole attitude towards the Council of Nicaea was no doubt determined by political as well as theological considerations. Yet it was long before the Frankish Church would admit its claim to Oecumenicity. The Synod of Paris in 825, indeed, held language of astounding boldness in dealing with the question. 'Ipse [*sc.* Hadrianus] rursus, favendo illis qui ejus instinctu tam superstitiosa quamque incongrua testimonia memorato operi inseruerant, per singula capitula in illorum excusationem respondere quae voluit, non tamen quae decuit, conatus est. Talia quippe quaedam sunt quae in illorum objectionem opposuit quae, remota pontificali auctoritate, et veritati et auctoritati refragantur. Sed licet in ipsis objectionibus aliquando absona, aliquando inconvenientia, aliquando etiam reprehensioni digna testimonia defensionis gratia proferre nisus sit, in fine tamen ejusdem apologiae sic sentire et tenere et praedicare ac praecipere de his quae agebantur professus est, sicut a beato papa Gregorio institutum esse constabat. Quibus verbis liquido colligitur, quod non tantum scienter, quantum ignoranter in eodem facto a recto tramite deviaverit. Nisi enim in conclusione objectionum suarum, retinaculis veritatis, beati scilicet

The capture of Gerona in 785 had marked the beginning of the permanent dominion of the Franks beyond the Pyrenees. This extension of Charles' authority involved in his eyes a corresponding increase of his responsibilities as 'steersman' of the Frankish Church. And thus the theological controversies then raging among the Spanish Christians acquired for him an importance which they had not hitherto possessed.

For many years Elipandus, the fiery Archbishop of Toledo, had stood forth as the champion of Spanish orthodoxy, and in that rôle had successfully denounced the wild theological speculations of the heretic Migetius and the teaching of his ally the wandering Frankish Bishop Egila. But, perhaps almost simultaneously with the first permanent advances of the Frankish power into the peninsula, he found his own teaching challenged and condemned as heretical, and that in a point where, as he believed, it could claim the support of the Spanish tradition and of the Spanish liturgy. The use of the term 'adoption' to express the relation of the Incarnate Christ to God the Father, not unknown in earlier days in other Western Churches, though rarely to be met

Gregorii institutis, adstrictus, iter devium præcavisset, in superstitionis præcipitium omnino labi potuisset.' Mansi, xiv. 422. The question of the Dual Procession, which Charles had raised on Tarasius' confession of faith, in which he described the Holy Ghost as *ex Patre per Filium*, was not settled in his lifetime, Hadrian arguing that Tarasius could claim patristic precedent for his phraseology, and Leo III., while acknowledging the truth of the *Filioque* clause, refusing to insert it in the Creed. But in this matter, unlike the iconoclastic controversy, the view which Charles espoused was destined to final triumph in the Western Church. The work on the subject which generally bears Alcuin's name was not his, and the visit of the monks from the Mount of Olives which revived the question took place after his death.

with in the writings of eighth century divines, had lingered on in the Church of Spain, and had been consecrated and perpetuated by many passages in the so-called Mozarabic liturgy. And now in Asturias, where Frankish influence, political and perhaps ecclesiastical, was strong and increasing, and where the claims of the see of Toledo to supremacy throughout Spain were regarded with aversion, two ecclesiastics arose, the priest Beatus and the monk Heterius of Libana, and charged Elipandus with teaching the heresy of Adoptionism, and denying the real and natural Sonship of Christ. The Archbishop was beside himself with rage. That he, the chief pastor of the Church which had so long upheld the cause of Christ against the onslaughts of the infidel, the incumbent of the see which from its first foundation had been famous for the pure orthodoxy of its doctrine, should be proclaimed a heretic by two obscure monks from the miserable mountains of Asturias was unendurable. He poured out his soul in a confidential letter, written in October, 785, to the Asturian Abbot Fidelis: he demanded that Beatus and Heterius should be suppressed: he urged that all heretics who denied that Christ, as Man, was the adoptive Son of His Father, should be rooted out of the land. The traditional antipathy between Toledo and Asturias found vent perhaps in his expression of a wish that the Asturian metropolitan and duke might both be banished, and in his indignant scouting of the idea that the Archbishop of Toledo, whose function was to teach and not to learn¹, could be instructed by a simple

¹ 'Non me interrogant sed docere quaerunt, quia servi sunt Antichristi.'

monk of Libana. The Abbot Fidelis belied his name, and Elipandus' letter came to the sight of his two antagonists. They replied in the winter of 785—786 with a joint treatise of ample proportions but of very moderate ability, and then, as far as the controversy was concerned, vanished from the stage. But it was only to make room for more important actors. At the very beginning of the struggle they had invoked the aid of Rome, and Hadrian, in a long epistle dealing with all the divers Spanish errors reported to him from various quarters¹, had expressed his sorrow that the Archbishop of Toledo and his disciple Ascaricus, Bishop of Braga, had embraced that heretical notion of Adoption which had hitherto been confined to the followers of Nestorius. But they appealed also to the neighbouring Church beyond the Pyrenees, and the development of the controversy in the course of the next few years enabled the orthodox party to assert a claim, which could not be denied, to the aid of the Frankish Bishops and the Frankish King. For Elipandus presently discovered his most valuable ally in a prelate whose diocese, through the recent extension of Charles' power, had now become an integral part of the Frankish realm.

Felix, the pious and learned Bishop of Urgel, the fame of whose blameless life had in days gone by reached even Alcuin's ears and drawn from him a letter entreating the favour of his intercessions², composed at

¹ *Codex Carol.* 95. *M.G.H., Epp.* III. 636—643. Groessler dates the letter September 1, 785.

² *Ep.* 5 [2], 785 (Jaffé); after 785 (Sickel); c. 789 (Duemmler); before 789 (Groessler).

the request of Elipandus a reasoned statement of his views on the point at issue, explaining and defending the Adoptionist position. The adhesion of such a man, as the result not merely of a determination to vindicate the traditional formularies of his communion but of the deliberate acceptance of a definite and consistent theological system¹, furnished the Adoptionist movement with the intellectual *prestige* which, in the hands of the ill-cultivated Elipandus, it had so sadly lacked. The aggressive energy, the fighting force, of Adoptionism still centred in Toledo, but it was at Urgel that it found its brains. A skilled dialectician, a well-read theologian, a courageous and severely logical thinker, Felix raised the controversy to a higher level than it had attained in the mutual personalities and irrelevant abuse of the earlier disputants. But, mentally superior as he was to Elipandus, he fell far below him in the personal courage and tenacity with which under pressure he maintained his opinions. And this was speedily made clear. At Regensburg in 792 he was cited before a Synod summoned by Charles the Great to decide a controversy which now affected his own dominions. The assembled Bishops condemned the tenets of the Adoptionists and ordered their books to be burnt, and Felix, spontaneously or under compulsion, recanted his opinions and accepted a confession of faith prescribed by the Synod as the creed to which he would henceforward faithfully adhere. His sincerity, however, seems to have been doubted. Instead of returning to Urgel he journeyed to Rome under the charge of Angilbert,

¹ Cf. Hauck, ii. 294.

and there remained, either in custody or under strict surveillance¹, till he had repeated in solemn form the recantation and confession he had already made at Regensburg. And though he then went back to his diocese it was no longer as its Bishop. The justification of this hesitation to trust him again in his old position was speedily furnished by his conduct. Breaking his solemn promise, recanting his recantation, he fled beyond the Frankish border, and became once more a teacher of Adoptionism. The cause of this change of front can only be surmised. Possibly Felix's repentance had really never been sincere. Or perhaps, surrounded and supported by the confident orthodoxy of the Frankish Bishops, he had for a moment felt a conviction which now faded away again when their influence was withdrawn, and, finding himself once more among the associates of earlier days, he contrasted the inflexible adherence of Elipandus to his old belief with his own perhaps too facile submission to the authority of the Synod. In any case he sought to atone for past weaknesses by present energy, and the disquieting news that the heresy was spreading apace, not only in Spain but even in Septimania, soon reached the Frankish Court. The Adoptionists themselves indeed now² ventured to challenge the attention of Charles and his advisers. Under the guidance of Elipandus himself the Spanish Bishops addressed two remonstrances, one to the Frankish clergy, the other to the Frankish King. The

¹ Simson, *Jahrbücher*, ii. 35, n. 3, suggests that the *in vinculis* of the acts of the Roman Synod of 798, generally rendered 'in prison,' may possibly mean simply 'at San Pietro in Vincoli.'

² 793.

first insisted on the orthodoxy of a position which was justified not only by patristic authority and by long tradition, but by its own intrinsic reasonableness. The second appealed from the tribunal of Regensburg to the judgment-seat of Charles, demanding the restoration of Felix to his see, and warning the Frankish ruler to eschew the error, as he would escape the fate, of Constantine the Great, who deserted the Catholic faith for the heresy of Arius. The appeal, though infelicitous alike in matter and in style, was not rejected. Charles fixed time and place—the first of June, 794, at Frankfort—for the assembling of a great Synod which should decide once and for all whether the doctrine of Felix and Elipandus was heresy or no. Meanwhile he forwarded copies of the Spanish appeals to Rome, and requested the Pope to deliver his opinion on their content. Hadrian replied by sending to the King a letter addressed to ‘his brethren and fellow priests (if indeed they were all worthy of the name!) the Spanish prelates,’ condemning the error of the Adoptionists in intemperate fashion, and threatening them, if they persisted in their heresy, with the eternal curse of Peter.

On the appointed day Charles took his seat on the throne in the great hall of the royal palace at Frankfort. The papal Legate, the Archbishops, Bishops, and Abbots who represented the Churches of France and Italy, of Britain and Galicia, were seated also; behind them stood the priests and deacons and other inferior clergy. At the King's command one of the royal notaries read aloud the letter of Elipandus. Then Charles himself arose, and, standing on the steps of the

throne, addressed the great assembly. Since the first days of the preceding year, when the plague of heresy began to spread, many of his subjects, though indeed only in the remotest parts of his dominions, had been led astray by a false doctrine which could not be left uncensured. What was to be done¹? His hearers were in little doubt as to the true nature of the Adoptionist teaching, but they desired a brief adjournment, that their decision might be put into formal shape. The request was granted, and a day was fixed for the solemn delivery of every man's opinion.

The Italian clergy under Paulinus drew up one memorial; the Frankish, British, and Galician clergy another. Paulinus, admitting a degree of truth in the writings of the Spanish heretics, concluded that nevertheless the bad far outweighed the good, and repudiated, while he sought to refute, the error of their teaching. The Frankish clergy declared their horror at the audacity of men who, passing by the teaching of the Fathers, searched curiously into matters which were too high for them; who, when they did cite patristic writings, quoted, with a politic vagueness as to their origin, passages which on examination proved to have been falsified or wilfully perverted; who set up the authority of Spanish writers and the Spanish Liturgy against the authority of Rome; who degraded Christianity in the eyes of the infidel by professing that their Master was a mere servant and adopted Son of the Father.

These documents ready, the Synod reassembled, and

¹ Mansi, xiii. 873.

in full session, after long discussion and careful examination of relevant passages of the Old and New Testaments, unanimously repudiated the heretical tenets of Adoptionism, declared the true doctrine of the Church on the question at issue, anathematised all contrary teachings, their authors, and their supporters, and condemned Elipandus and Felix, if they refused the wholesome discipline of repentance, penance, and recantation, to expulsion from the communion of Catholic and orthodox men.

The act of the Synod was signed by all its members, and the condemnation of Adoptionism was complete. It remained however to bring it to the notice of the heretics themselves, and that task was undertaken by the King. The letter which he addressed to the Spanish prelates breathed no such spirit of vindictive passion as Hadrian's had done. He did not indeed attempt to conceal his entire concurrence in the decision which the letter of the Pope, the *Sacrostylabus* of the Italian Prelates, and the *Epistola Synodica* of the other clergy alike proclaimed. The Synod of Frankfort had assembled at his command, had sat under his presidency¹, had taken its cue from his opening speech²; its conclusions had been foreshadowed in his own words, and did but express his own convictions. But, while he thus fully confirmed the verdict pronounced in the three documents he forwarded, he was careful to avoid giving needless offence, to eschew personalities, to acknowledge the right of the Spaniards to demand the conference which he had granted, to express his gratitude for their

¹ 'praecipiente et praesidente.'

² 'auditor et arbiter assedi.'

intercessions, even to hold out a hope, though in the form of a conditional withdrawal if they persisted in their heresy, that he might free them from the yoke of the infidel. In the gentle tone there is something which almost suggests the hand of Alcuin. It is indeed curious that none of the many letters of his which still remain contains any allusion to his share in the Synod of Frankfort. That he was present is undoubted, that he took part in drawing up the *Epistola Synodica*, and even Charles' letter, perhaps more than probable. The Annals of Einhard take occasion under the date 794 to remark that he was famous in those days for holiness and learning¹, and it may have been at Frankfort that he was first brought into contact with not a few of the friends of his later life². Yet his letters never mention the Synod. Perhaps indeed, so far as the iconoclastic controversy was concerned, he was not unwilling to forget an occasion when the will of Charles and the will of Hadrian had collided, and Hadrian had been forced to yield. But for the rest no plausible reason can be assigned for his apparent silence, except that it is perhaps only apparent, since no known letter of his can be assigned with absolute certainty to the year 794³.

¹ *Annal. Einhardi Fuldenses*: 'his temporibus Alchwinus, cognomento Albinus, sanctitate et doctrina clarus habetur.' *M.G.H. SS.* i. ed. Pertz, 351.

² Groessler (p. 15) holds that he met Benedict of Aniane for the first time at Frankfort.

³ *Ep.* 24 [3], to Higbald of Lindisfarne, to whom Witto was returning after spending a year with Alcuin; *Ep.* 25 [4], to Riculf of Mainz, regretting his absence on a Saxon campaign, and complaining of loneliness, Angilbert being in Italy, Witto in Britain, Mopsus at Tours, Martin lying ill at Cwentawich; *Ep.* 26 [9], to the same, thanking him for the present of a comb carved in the shape of a *mirum animal*, with two heads and sixty teeth (cf. *Carm.* v.); and *Ep.* 27 [32], to Hadrian, sent by Angilbert, may perhaps belong to it,

The result of the doings at Frankfort was by no means so decisive as might have been expected. The heresy of Adoptionism continued to gain ground, and its original champions remained unshaken in their old convictions. It was perhaps not long after the Synod that Alcuin himself addressed to Felix a pathetic letter of remonstrance and exhortation, *epistolam caritatis calamo scriptam*, entreating him to abandon his vain attempt at improving on the teaching of the Apostles and fathers¹; to eschew that contentious obstinacy which converted error into heresy²; to realise how impossible it was that a bishop at the end of the ages, in a remote corner of the world, should prove the Evangelists, the Apostles, the Church of Peter³, to be all mistaken and he himself alone possessed of truth; and to beware lest his zeal, his devotion, his holy life, should all at last avail him nothing through his blind attachment to a single phrase⁴. Finally he besought him to separate himself from those few heretics who found an all-absorbing interest in the contemplation of their own wisdom, and to join the great body of the Church in the

as Duemmler suggests. Jaffé gives 783—785 for 24 and 25, 783—786 for 26. Hampe, *loc. cit.*, would assign 27 to 795, and thinks it was never despatched, Hadrian's death at the end of the year causing *Ep.* 94 [51] to be substituted for it.

¹ *Ep.* 23 [30], 'Quid nos homunculi in fine seculi melius excogitare poterimus quam ut...apostolicam...sequamur doctrinam?'

² 'Non est hereticus nisi ex contentione: noli contendere frustra.'

³ 'Tota evangelica clamat auctoritas, omnia apostolorum protestantur dicta, Romana praedicat ecclesia, Christum Jesum verum esse Dei filium et proprium...Nemo sobrius contra veritatem; nemo catholicus contra sanctae et unicae ecclesiae doctores; nemo pius contra sanctorum testimonia sentit.'

⁴ 'In uno tantummodo adoptionis verbo a sancta et apostolica ecclesia discordamini. Facile est hoc verbum...immutare, et evangelicis atque apostolicis uti verbis.'

simple and humble acceptance of revealed truth¹. The tone was studiously gentle, but the underlying assumption—that intellectual pride had led the Adoptionists astray—was not perhaps calculated to conciliate their leaders. For the present, however, the matter rested there.

A year after the Synod of Frankfort, in the late summer of 795, when Charles was absent in Saxony, Alcuin received a message from Archbishop Eanbald, urging him to return forthwith to York. Eanbald was anxious to resign his see, as Ælbert had done, that his successor might be consecrated in his lifetime, and apparently he hoped that that successor would be Alcuin. He was doomed to disappointment. His messenger—a younger Eanbald, a priest—fell ill, and the letters which came from Alcuin by another hand informed him that the sender himself was suffering from fever, and moreover could take no step without consulting the Frankish King. He hoped indeed to arrive before Eanbald resigned; in any case however freedom of election must at all costs be secured². The priest

¹ 'Nolite vestrae amatores esse sapientiae cum paucis, sed veritatis adsertores sitis cum plurimis.' The date of the letter is uncertain: Jaffé giving 793, Duenmmler 'c. 793,' Groessler 'after 794,' on the ground that Alcuin speaks of Felix's reply, which arrived in 798, as being drawn up *mox* after his own letter. Hauck again (ii. 300, n. i.) prefers 793 on the ground of Alcuin's language in *Adv. Elip.* i. 16, 'Antequam...venissem...haec...secta...ventilata est in celeberrimo loco [Regensburg]...et synodali auctoritate damnata...et a...Papa...funditus extirpata, donec idem Felix infelicitur in vestras refugiens partes sopitos infidelitatis cineres vobis exhortantibus resuscitare intendit. Cui ego in hac adveniens partes charitatis calamo epistolam...dirigere curavi,' which however seems too vague to build upon, especially since Felix's reply was not received till the summer of 798.

² *Epp.* 43 [35]; 44 [36], to the Monks of York and the Archbishop respectively. The bearer probably took also *Ep.* 46 [39], from the younger Eanbald to an English Archbishop, *i.e.*, according to Jaffé and Duenmmler, Eanbald I. The references to certain horses left by the writer in his correspondent's keeping, however, and to the *patria* to which the messenger is hurrying, seem to point rather to Æthelhard of Canterbury.

Eanbald soon followed with another letter, again insisting that, if the election could not be postponed till Alcuin's coming, it should be conducted with scrupulous rectitude, and without the least suspicion of simony¹.

Soon afterwards Alcuin appears to have joined the King². The vast treasure of the Avar 'Ring' had just been captured by Duke Eric of Friuli, and conveyed to Aachen, if the Chronicle of Melrose speaks truth, in fifteen great waggons, each drawn by four oxen. Charles seized the opportunity to distribute magnificent presents among his allies and friends, and bespoke the services of Alcuin to compose letters of compliment to accompany them and to convey in person those designed for the Anglo-Saxon princes and prelates. Two events however, happening within a few months of each other, caused some alteration in his plans. On Christmas Day, 795, Pope Hadrian died, and Leo III., elected on the following day, was consecrated as his successor on December 27. The news seems to have greatly shocked the King, who, in spite of political estrangements, had entertained a strong personal liking for Hadrian; 'he wept,' says Einhard, 'as if he had lost a brother or a son.' A new use was found for part of the Avar spoil in the purchase of masses for the soul of the dead pontiff, while the presents which had already been set aside for him were sent to his successor by the hand of

¹ *Ep.* 48 [37], to the Monks of York. Cf. *Ep.* 47 [40], apparently to the same, and *Ep.* 42 [34], also to the same, which cannot be exactly dated. *Ep.* 45 [38], which went at the same time, is perhaps addressed to Æthelhard; cf. the reference to medicine, as in *Ep.* 46, and to a journey to Rome.

² *Ep.* 49 [215], to Ricbod of Trier, reports that Alcuin is going to meet the King, but does not know when he will return from Saxony or where he means to winter. *Ep.* 50 [89], to Liutgarde, asks for information on these points.

Angilbert, who took with him letters of congratulation from Charles¹ and Alcuin², and a paper of instructions for his own guidance, which, viewed in the light of later occurrences, is not lacking in significance³. Meanwhile presents from the Avar spoil were being despatched in every direction⁴. The prayers of the faithful for Hadrian's soul were to be sought not only on the Continent but in Britain, and a gift was prepared for every Anglo-Saxon Bishop. For Offa of Mercia an Avar belt and sword and two robes of silk were set apart, and for Æthelred of Northumbria a present of the like value. And Alcuin was to take them, and with them that letter of Charles to Offa which has become famous as the record of the first commercial treaty ever negotiated by an English King⁵. But the murder of the Northumbrian King by the High Reeve Aldred, on April 9, 796, frustrated the plan. The gifts for Offa and the Bishops were indeed duly despatched, but Charles was with difficulty restrained by Alcuin from avenging the death of Æthelred on the Northumbrians, and Alcuin himself declared his intention to abandon finally all idea of returning to his

¹ *Ep.* 93 [Jaffé, *Monumenta Carolina*, 354].

² *Ep.* 94 [51].

³ *Ep.* 92 [Jaffé, *Mon. Carol.*, 353]. Charles apparently was not a little sceptical as to the new Pope's holiness.

⁴ Three letters from Alcuin to Paulinus should apparently be placed about this time: *Ep.* 95 [52] announces Angilbert's departure to Rome; *Ep.* 96 [53] accompanies two bracelets of gold sent to Paulinus at Alcuin's instance by the Queen; *Ep.* 99 [56] inquires into the Patriarch's intentions as to the conversion of his neighbours the Avars. *Ep.* 190 [131], to Peter of Milan, of like purport with *Ep.* 96; *Ep.* 97 [54], asking Angilbert for relics; and *Ep.* 98 [55], a letter of complaisance to Duke Eric of Friuli, seem to belong to the same period.

⁵ *Ep.* 100 [57].

native land, where such as he, he felt, could do no good¹. This determination once taken, and the long-cherished hope that he might end his days at York in peace and quiet thus surrendered, Alcuin began to revolve in his mind various schemes for spending to the best advantage whatever time might remain to him on earth. He had passed his sixtieth year, and the wearing work of the Palace School, the turmoil of a migratory court, had become increasingly burdensome to him. He desired to rid himself of secular responsibilities, to devote himself to a religious life. His letters at this period constantly express a longing for some 'safe haven'² in which he might be sheltered from the stormy tossings of the world.

But Charles was not prepared to grant him his discharge. His services were still too valuable and too much needed to be dispensed with. The Palace School might indeed be confided to other hands. The young princes were growing up. The scholars with whom Alcuin had worked, the pupils he had trained, might be trusted to maintain its reputation. But the struggle

¹ *Ep.* 101 [58] to Offa. He wrote also to Offa's daughter Æthelburga, sister of the widowed Queen (*Ep.* 102 [59] and possibly *Ep.* 103 [60]; *Ep.* 62 [46], urging her to take the veil, and accompanying a chalice and paten and (from Liutgarde) a robe, taken perhaps from the store of Avar spoils, is also addressed to her); to Ædilthyð, mother of the murdered king (*Ep.* 105 [62], and perhaps *Ep.* 106 [63]; *Ep.* 79 [50] also is to her); to Osbald, his immediate successor, whose reign lasted only twenty-seven days, reproaching him for his misdoings (*Ep.* 109 [66]; Osbald later became an abbot, and died at York in 799); to Eadwulf, the High Reeve who had so narrowly escaped death in 793, and who now succeeded Osbald, exhorting him to profit by the misfortunes of his predecessors (*Ep.* 108 [65]); and to the Bishops of Britain, requesting their prayers for the repose of Hadrian's soul (*Ep.* 104 [61]).

² Cf. *Ep.* 97 [54]: 'Te abeunte temptavi saepius ad portum stabilitatis venire. Sed rector rerum et dispensator animarum necdum concessit posse quod olim fecit velle.'

with ignorance was by no means over. Alcuin's aid was still essential both to remove the traces of Merovingian illiteracy and to guard against its recrudescence.

The opportune death of Itherius, Abbot of St Martin's, at Tours¹, rendered possible a compromise which at once released Alcuin from his present burdensome duties and retained him in the service of learning and religion. As Abbot of St Martin's he might revive the earlier reputation of the monastery for discipline and letters, while he himself was enabled to lead a more regular life than had been possible at Aachen. The scheme had yet another recommendation, for the ample revenues of the abbey and its dependencies would more than compensate the new abbot for the sacrifices which his abandonment of his Northumbrian inheritance entailed.

Accordingly, not perhaps without vain remonstrances on his part², Alcuin was appointed to succeed Itherius, and thus a wish once expressed by him in a letter to the monks of St Martin's³ found an unexpected realisation⁴.

¹ *Ep.* 52 [19] is addressed to him.

² *Ep.* 101 [58], to Offa, declares that the appointment was made against his own wishes.

³ *Ep.* 51 [41].

⁴ The exact date of his appointment is unknown. It was before he heard of Offa's death (July 26—29, 796), and apparently after he heard of Æthelred's murder (April 18). *Ep.* 107 [64], to Arno, after May 25, does not refer to it. Alcuin was titular abbot of other monasteries, St Peter's at Ferrières and St Lupus' at Troyes, the *cella Sancti Stephani* (identified by Monnier with the abbey of Choisy-sur-Arne), the monastery of St Servatus (cf. Froben, i. 128), with S. Josse-sur-mer and (as Hauck thinks) Berg-bei-Roermund. The monastery of St Yrieux in the diocese of Limoges was also subject to St Martin's (Jaffé in *Ep.* 298 [226]). It is by no means certain when he received these various appointments, though the *Vita Alcuini* makes it appear that Ferrières and St Lupus were assigned to him at an early period.

CHAPTER VII.

ALCUIN'S LIFE: 796—804.

AT Tours the modern traveller finds but few remains of the Abbey of St Martin's. Two vast towers—the one known as the *Tour d'Horloge*, the other, the so-called *Tour Charlemagne*, built, two centuries after her death, over the tomb of Charles the Great's last Queen, Liutgarde—alone mark the site of what was once one of the most famous monasteries of Europe: and the house where Balzac was born, the statues of Descartes and Rabelais, and the ornate and beautiful cathedral, rather than the ancient glories of the patron saint of Gaul, claim the attention of the traveller. But, great as are the changes which have been wrought in the city even within the last two centuries, there is much that still remains unchanged. The little capital of 'the garden of France,' lying on either side of the wide and placid Loire, whose stream, now shrinking till it fills but half its channel, now swelling till it submerges all the country round, yet ever seems the embodiment of mild beneficence, is still the centre of a peaceful, contented, quietly prosperous land of orchards and vineyards. Such it is now, such it was more than eleven hundred years ago, but in those distant days it was also

something more. In the time of Charles the Great the Abbey which held the shrine of Martin, the soldier saint, was perhaps the foremost in the Frankish realm. Its possessions, farms and villas and smaller monasteries, were scattered far and wide from east to west, so that the abbot, the master (so it was said) of twenty thousand serfs, might travel from one end of the kingdom to the other and yet rarely sleep under any roof that was not his own. The riches which Abbot Aulard had accumulated under Pippin the Short had at least not diminished under the rule of Wulfhard and Itherius, and from Charles the Great the Abbey received a confirmation, if not an extension, of the rights and privileges it had enjoyed under his predecessor.

And here, moving westward like the sun, Alcuin came to spend the evening of his days. For five years he struggled hard and faithfully against ignorance and misbelief, with the weight of many cares and responsibilities pressing heavily upon him. For nearly three more, when he had shifted to other shoulders the secular duties of his office, he devoted himself in the main, though in no spirit of selfish absorption or indifference to the interests of others, to the task of preparing for the end.

But for the present the work of reclaiming *Turonica rusticitas* by means of teaching like that which he had imparted in bygone days at York claimed the chief share of his attention. It was a quiet, unobtrusive work, rarely making itself heard or thrusting itself into observation. Now and again, indeed, when occasion arose, Alcuin would describe his methods or bewail his difficulties, but for the most part his letters, when they

were not purely hortatory, dealt rather with the wider interests of the Frankish Empire or of the world at large. And the first which can be ascribed with any certainty to the years he spent at Tours refer to problems arising out of the extension of his master's dominions and to certain recent incidents in the confused and unhappy story of his own island home.

The capture of the Avar 'Ring' by Duke Eric in 795 had been followed up in 796 by fresh victories won by the army under Pippin. The Ring, stormed a second time, was completely spoiled and destroyed, the new Khakhan and other Avar chiefs tendered their submission to Pippin, and he returned to Aachen with vast booty and a long array of captives.

In accordance with Charles' invariable rule the conversion of the Avars followed close upon their conquest. The subject had been discussed even during the recent campaigns by a synod convened by Pippin's order, under the presidency of Paulinus. The main principles to be observed were then laid down, and in the spring of 796 Bishop Arno of Salzburg was commissioned by Charles, apparently at the suggestion of the Avars themselves, to undertake the task, in part at least, under the protection of a Frankish army¹. The news, communicated

¹ Charles had made some arrangements for defraying the expenses out of the revenues of Arno's diocese and abbey: cf. *Ep.* 107 [64], 'tertiam partem de laboribus tuis per singula loca seu episcopatus seu monasterii concessit tibi rex in eleemosynam tuam tibi dari.' The passage has been variously interpreted. Jaffé (*in loc.*) explains that one third of the expense was to be met by an imposition on the lands of the bishopric and abbey; Zeissberg (*Arno von Salzburg*, 328), that a third instead of a fourth was to be paid to him as bishop; Rettberg (*Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, ii. 559), that Charles had, 'um Arnos Eifer anzuspornen, ihm den dritten Theil der Einkünfte von den Bekehrten zugesichert.' A more plausible explanation, which

to Alcuin in a letter which reached him on May 25, excited his interest to the highest point. That Arno, his dearest friend, should engage in the highest of all duties was naturally a source of joy. Yet his mind was full of misgivings. The unhappy precedent of the Saxon missions was fresh in his memory. The Gospel of Peace, he wrote to Arno, had there proved only a cause of ceaseless strife. Much of the evil had been due to the haste with which the system of tithes had been thrust upon the converts. Tithes, men said, had destroyed the faith among the Saxons¹. Taking, not giving, had appeared to be the chief function of the Church of Christ; her ministers had assumed the ungrateful rôle of tax-collectors. That the dangerous precedent should be avoided in the present instance seemed to him of the highest importance. Let the Avars at least recognise in Arno a spreader of good tidings, not a gatherer of tithes²! This was written in May, on the receipt of Arno's news, and before Alcuin had retired to Tours. But the subject continued to occupy his mind even among his new surroundings. He wrote to Charles himself, approving the projected mission, and emphasising the need for due order in the work, especially in the matter of baptism, but pleading for a recognition of the fact that the Avars would be but babes in the Faith, and that for babes—St Paul himself had laid it down—strong meat was worse than useless. The system of tithe in itself was doubtless

has received the support of Hauck (II. 466, n. i.) assumes a remission of one-third of the royal dues from the lands in question for the benefit of Arno's undertaking.

¹ *Ep.* 107 [64], 'Decimae ut dicitur Saxonum subverterunt fidem.'

² *Ib.* 'Esto praedicator pietatis, non decimarum exactor.'

good, but whether it should be enforced at once was quite another question¹.

He forwarded a copy of this warning letter to Arno, who had solicited his advice, and to whom he wrote a second² and yet a third³ time, insisting that the Avars must be won to a willing acceptance of the Faith by the gracious presentment of its truths, not forced into an outward conformity by coercive measures: the obduracy of the Adoptionists being a warning that faith could not be compelled. He also approached Maganfrid, the King's chamberlain, perhaps as a man able to influence his master, on the same subject, again urging the presentation of Christianity in an attractive form, and repeating the warning that in Saxony failure had been to a large extent the result of a mistaken policy, that the duty of the teachers of the Church was to preach to, not to prey upon, their flocks⁴. And he besought Charles himself to make the best beginning possible by displaying in his own person the Christian quality of mercy⁵, an appeal to which, as

¹ *Ep.* 110 [67], 'Melius est decimationem amittere quam fidem perdere.'

² *Ep.* 112 [70].

³ *Ep.* 113 [71], 'Fides ex voluntate fit, non ex necessitate. Quomodo potest homo cogi ut credat, quod non credit? Impelli potest homo ad baptismum, sed non ad fidem.' The letter contains an explanation of the baptismal rite, and a characteristically mystic interpretation of the number 153 in St John xxi. 11. The numbers 1 to 17 added together = 153; the 10 Commandments + the 7 Gifts of the Spirit = 17; 7 again = the 3 Persons of the Trinity + the 4 quarters of the globe.

⁴ *Ep.* 111 [69], 'Si tanta instantia leve Christi jugum durissimo Saxonorum populo praedicaretur quanta decimarum redditio vel legalis pro parvissimis quibuslibet culpis edicti necessitas exigebatur, forte baptismatis sacramenta non abhorrerent...Sint doctores fidei... praedicatores, non praedatores.'

⁵ *Ep.* 118 [76]. Alcuin also interceded for certain political offenders, with what result does not appear.

appears from a letter from Alcuin to Pippin¹, Charles lent a willing ear.

Meanwhile news had come from York. Eanbald I., still Archbishop, died on August 10, 796. Four days later his namesake, who had visited Alcuin in the previous year, was consecrated in his place. It is probable that the choice had been made long before, to obviate the possibility of any royal interference, but Alcuin's letter of congratulation, in which he expressed a hope that Eanbald II. would live to inherit from him the books which he had himself received from Ælbert, was also a letter of exhortation, and betrayed perhaps a certain uneasiness, not wholly unjustified by subsequent events, lest the new primate should fail to reach the high standard of his predecessors².

These first months of Alcuin's rule at St Martin's were troubled by weakness and suffering; hard work and the recurrent attacks of Roman fever, the *Romana comes* of his letters, had apparently prematurely aged him, and broken down his constitution³. Yet the few letters which can be assigned to the winter of 796—797 show him busily engaged in his duties at Tours, and displaying the keenest interest still in English affairs. It was perhaps a messenger sent by him, with Charles'

¹ *Ep.* 119 [77]. Alcuin's warnings as to the danger of levying tithes forthwith seem to have borne some fruit; cf. Hauck, ii. 466, n. 4. The letters were written certainly after August 10, 796, probably in the autumn of that year or in the following winter: the *spero me totam aetatem in illis stare partibus* of *Ep.* 112 [70] almost certainly refers to the summer of 797, and, if this is so, Jaffé's arguments for dating *Ep.* 117 [75] (to the Monks of Murbach) 796 fall through.

² *Ep.* 114 [72]. *Epp.* 115 [73], and 116 [74], mainly hortatory, are also addressed to Eanbald.

³ He is 'fracto corpore' (*Ep.* 121 [78]); 'senectute et infirmitate fatigatus' (*Ep.* 114 [72]).

permission, to supply from the library at York the most glaring defects of St Martin's, who carried letters to many friends in both Mercia and Northumbria, among them being Ceonwulf, who had succeeded to the Mercian throne on the death of his distant cousin Ecgrith¹; Osbert 'the Patrician,' one of Offa's ministers²; and Bishop Higbald of Lindisfarne³. Æthelhard of Canterbury also received much earnest advice about this time. Trouble had broken out in the Southern Province, perhaps even before the death of Offa: a certain Eadbert Praen, who had apparently fled some time before to Charles' Court, and had been despatched by him to Rome, there to be judged by the Pope and Archbishop Æthelhard⁴, reappearing in England and claiming the Kentish throne. The Archbishop, a faithful adherent of the Mercian dynasty, fled from Canterbury, and for a time Eadbert was triumphant⁵. The report of these events drew from Alcuin a letter to the men of Canterbury, urging them to recall their

¹ *Ep.* 123 [80]. Ecgrith succeeded his father Offa in December 796, but died within five months, and Alcuin regarded his death as the retribution for the bloodshed by which Offa had secured his succession. *Ep.* 61 [45], a letter of exhortation, is addressed to him.

² *Ep.* 122 [79].

³ *Ep.* 124 [81]. The letter is often quoted to show that in regard to the old heathen literature Alcuin's attitude was identical, not with Charles the Great's, but with his successor's. He was scandalised at hearing that pagan songs instead of patristic sermons were sometimes recited at Higbald's table. 'Quid Hinieldus (sc. the Ingeld of the Sagas) cum Christo? Angusta est domus; utrosque tenere non poterit. Non vult rex coelestis cum paganis et perditis nomine tenus regibus communionem habere; quia rex ille aeternus regnat in coelis, ille paganus perditus plangit in inferno.' The tone is almost harsh, but after all Higbald was a bishop; and Giant Pagan was still alive.

⁴ *Epp.* 100 [57], 101 [58], 'de Odberhto presbytero.'

⁵ Æthelhard witnessed a charter of Ecgrith, dated at Bath. Haddan and Stubbs, iii. 496.

Archbishop¹, and Æthelhard presently returned, and wrote to the Pope, begging him to excommunicate 'the apostate Eadbert, a second Julian.' Leo readily agreed, and, when announcing to Ceonwulf what he had done, he further promised the abolition of the Mercian archbishopric and the reestablishment of the primacy of Canterbury². For Ceonwulf, perhaps to secure or to reward the fidelity of Æthelhard, had determined to reverse the ecclesiastical policy of Offa, and, since the Pope would not revive the scheme of Gregory the Great for an archbishopric of London, to restore the rights of Canterbury. The news rejoiced the heart of Alcuin, to whom the glory of St Augustine's see was always dear, but he was characteristically opposed to harsh measures, and desired the 'schism' in the English Church to be healed by peaceful means. Writing to exhort Æthelhard to repent and do penance for his hasty flight, he begged him to consult with Eanbald of York, and if possible secure the see of Lichfield to Higbert for his life, though he himself should at once resume exclusive archiepiscopal functions for the whole of the original province of Canterbury³.

¹ *Ep.* 129 [86].

² *Ep.* 127 [84].

³ *Ep.* 128 [85]. The dates of these letters are not certain. *Epp.* 100 [57] and 101 [58]—796, after April 18—speak of Æthelhard's visit to Rome; if, as seems likely, he was the recipient of *Epp.* 45 [38] and 46 [39] he must have returned at latest in the latter half of 795; he had been elected in 791, but was not consecrated till July 21, 793; possibly he then went to Rome to fetch his pall. Offa died on June 26, 796, Ecgrith in the middle of the following December; between these two dates the Archbishop was apparently at Bath (cf. *supra*, p. 100 n. 5). Duemmler seems to be right in dating *Ep.* 129 [86] 797, but *Ep.* 128 [85] was probably written later; and *Ep.* 127 [84] (Leo III. to Ceonwulf) should perhaps be dated, as by Haddan and Stubbs, 798, rather than, as by Duemmler, 797, in view of the 'praeterito anno

Alcuin seems to have left Tours early in 797 to visit the King, who soon after Easter marched into Saxony, there to carry out a far-reaching scheme of transplantation, which was intended to establish a strong Frankish element in the population of the Saxon districts themselves. St Martin's, or its Abbot, had possessions in Alsace which demanded attention, and Alcuin expected, at any rate, to be detained throughout the summer in eastern France¹. There he encountered the envoys sent by Eanbald of York to fetch his pall from Rome, and furnished them with a letter of commendation to the Pope². But by November, when Charles had returned to Aachen and was preparing to move his Court into winter quarters on the Weser, Alcuin was at St Martin's again, beginning a correspondence which was destined to cause him not a little pain.

The year 797 was the last of the Dionysian cycle of 19 years, and, knowing the King's keen interest in astronomical questions, Alcuin wrote to remind him that it would be necessary, in order that the fourteenth day of the paschal moon might fall on April 5, 798, in accordance with the calendar, to make a *saltus lunae* in the last complete lunar month but one of 797, *i.e.* to

legationem meam . . . per Wadan abbatem misimus' of Ceonwulf's letter to Leo (Haddan and Stubbs, iii. 523) to which it replies, for Ceonwulf did not become King till the end of 796. Eadbert Praen was captured and mutilated by Ceonwulf in 798; the Canterbury question was not satisfactorily settled till Æthelhard had been a second time to Rome.

¹ *Ep.* 112 [70], 'Et si de novo tibi (sc. Arnoni) non liceat mecum loqui, donec venero ad dominum regem, spero me totam aetatem in illis stare partibus; poterimus in Helisetis conjungi...quia res aliquas habemus in Elisetis.'

² *Ep.* 125 [82]. Eanbald received the pall on September 8.

give the November moon twenty-nine¹ days only instead of its usual thirty, and to date the December moon from November 25, not November 26: an arrangement which, in the ordinary alternation of months of twenty-nine and thirty days respectively, would bring about the desired result.

A little later a messenger brought letters of good tidings from the King, and Alcuin, cheered by their arrival, responded with a lively account of the questions which poured into his ears at St Martin's 'as insects flock in in the summer through the open windows²,' and which sometimes troubled him not a little, since the questioners were not content if in his answers he alleged the authority of Rome, unless he also satisfied their reason. At the moment the subject under discussion was the meaning of the names Septuagesima, Sexagesima, and Quinquagesima, as applied to the three Sundays before Lent, and the abbot had endeavoured to justify their use on the ground that they were not only customary but also apt, recalling certain explanations which he had heard at Rome, and adding others of his own. The inquiry led him on to another subject, always a favourite with him, the mystical meaning of numbers, and he elaborated for Charles' delectation a mystical explanation of the three names, ending his letter with the words of the Queen of Sheba, 'Blessed are thy men, blessed are these thy servants which stand before thee continually and hear thy wisdom!' The King quickly replied, criticising Alcuin's mystical interpretation and suggesting other explanations. 'And why,' he said,

¹ Not 31, as Lorenz states: *Life of Alcuin*, p. 31.

² *Ep.* 143 [96].

taking up the quotation from the Book of Kings, 'if the royal wisdom was so great, did not Alcuin come to hear it, that they might wander together in the green pastures of the Lord and delight their eyes with the flowers of the Scripture¹?' But before this letter reached him Alcuin began an answer to an earlier communication from the King, now lost, dealing with his observations on the *saltus lunae* of the previous November. These observations had been sharply criticised by certain scholars of the Palace School, who dated the legal year not from January but from September, and apparently wished to place the *saltus lunae* at a later date than that which he approved. The criticisms touched Alcuin in a tender place. He declared, indeed, with his wonted courtliness, that even reproaches were sweet if they came from Charles. He acknowledged that he was prone to err, though not less ready, he maintained, to admit his errors. But there was a touch of irony in his reference to himself as an aged Entellus who had laid aside his gloves and yielded place to those younger men who were now persecuting his withered age with blinding blows. Something of personal pique, something of jealousy for his professional reputation, perhaps, combined with that devotion to the Roman tradition which was the pole star of his life to arouse a resentment which he found it hard to subdue. He charged his critics with relapsing from the light of Christianity into Memphitic darkness. He knew not how the Palace School, where when he left it only

¹ *Ep.* 144 [97], 'Venite, adsistite, audite. Et pariter in Domino in pratis vernantibus, varietate florum scripturarum jocundantes, delectemur.'

'Latins' were to be found, had thus become a stronghold of the Egyptians. Their teaching was not new to his ears, but for him, who, like Moses, had left behind the darkness of Egypt and come into the Promised Land, the clear daylight of the Christian faith, there could be no going back. For him the new year must begin not when the darkest days were drawing on, but when Christ was born and the hours of daylight were once more slowly lengthening.

Nor on their own principles could the *saltus* at which they stumbled be avoided. For, since the fourteenth day of the Paschal moon had fallen in 797 on April 17, the first of September could not fall, as they maintained, on *lunae v*¹, if the regular succession of lunar months of twenty-nine and thirty days alternately were maintained meanwhile: the *saltus* which they rejected in November they would find themselves compelled to place elsewhere. Not indeed that he had any desire to enter into controversy with them; 'let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind'².

But as Charles desired he had drawn up a treatise on the *saltus lunae*, containing first the opinions of the learned, secondly the results to be arrived at by reasoning, and thirdly the calculations of mathematicians; treating the matter thus from three points of view, since it was the wisdom of Solomon that 'a threefold cord is not quickly broken'³.

He had written thus far, and was about to despatch

¹ Not, as Jaffé interprets it, the fifth *regularis lunaris*, counting *lunae xiv* of April 17 as the first, nor September 5, as Werner translates.

² Rom. xiv. 5.

³ Eccles. iv. 22.

his messenger, when Charles' reply to his letter on the Sundays before Lent arrived and demanded acknowledgment. The royal condescension in so fully answering his communication, the gracious invitation to the camp in Saxony, calmed his troubled spirits and filled him with delight. But he could not bring himself to take up the friendly challenge and venture his unwarlike person amid the clang and clash of war¹. The Queen of Sheba had visited Solomon in Jerusalem, not in Philistia! Only he hoped that he too might be present to welcome the second Solomon on his triumphant return to Aachen, where a new temple was rising even now to the glory of God².

In July, accordingly, he left Tours for Aachen, hoping there to meet the King, and perhaps to see something of his best-beloved friend, Arno of Salzburg, of whose doings in Italy, where the Pope had recently conferred on him the dignity of an Archbishop, he was eager to hear³. His plans, he wrote, were uncertain; he might soon return to Tours, or he might remain for some time 'by the waters of the Meuse': at least he would probably be there till August.

In this letter to Arno he referred to a subject which was greatly exercising his mind. The Synod of Frankfort had failed to lay the spectre of heresy in Septimania. His own letter to Felix had produced no

¹ 'Quid valet infirmitas Flacci inter arma? quid inter apros lepusculus? quid inter leones agniculus...? Dum praecepta domini Dei habetis, timidus domi remaneat, ne faciet alios timere. Et Virgilius Augusto scribens, "tu sectaris apros, ego retia servo."'

² *Ep.* 145 [98]. See Appendix II.

³ *Ep.* 146 [101], 'Nos vero velut aestiva hirundo ad palatium mense Julio properamus.'

good effect. From time to time disquieting rumours reached his ears of the spread of Adoptionism and the ever-increasing boldness of its adherents. In 795 he had bewailed the Spanish heresy in writing to the monks of York¹. To Arno he now declared *ad huc se tota Spania errat in adoptione*. He was doing what he could himself to stem the tide. He had written to the monks of Gothia or Septimania a letter of warning not only against this particular error, but against certain Spanish customs in the administration of the Sacraments which seemed to him unorthodox², and had requested them to send a copy of his letter to the monks of Lérins. He had urged Paulinus of Aquileia to follow up his recent composition of a *symbolum fidei* (such a compilation as he himself had long desired the King to sanction for distribution to all priests, that they might commit it to memory) by engaging in the renewed conflict with the deadly serpent of heresy, which now, though bruised by the club of the Gospel, was rearing its head once more among the tangled thickets of Spain³. And, with the letter in which he replied to the criticisms of the *pueri Aegyptiaci*, he had sent to Charles the scheme of a small treatise against Adoptionism, which, if the royal approval were accorded,

¹ *Ep.* 43 [35]. Adoptionism is not expressly named, but the reference seems certain. *Ep.* 41 [29], to Charles, complains that certain 'fideles doctores' have been corrupted; the date is doubtful; Jaffé gives '793'; Groessler '794-5, after the Synod of Frankfort'; Duemmler 'c. 794-5.'

² The use of salt in the Eucharist and the practice of single instead of trine immersion: *Ep.* 137 [93]. Duemmler places *Ep.* 138 [277] (to the same monks, on the duty of confession) at about the same date.

³ *Ep.* 139 [94]. He refers in it to a secret doubt in the minds of some as to whether the souls of Apostles, martyrs, and other saints were or were not admitted to Heaven before the Day of Judgment.

might be distributed as an antidote to the poison of the Spanish heresy, in the districts most exposed to danger¹. And now, writing to the King to thank him for kindly messages and gifts, sent by Fredegis, and to answer his inquiries as to the course of the sun, he had to admit that in a communication lately received through Charles himself² from Felix of Urgel (a long-drawn answer, long delayed, to his own letter of exhortation and entreaty) even worse heresies and blasphemies were to be found than had appeared in the earlier writings of the Spanish prelate³. A refutation was imperatively needed, but he felt himself unable to cope with the task single-handed, and desired the appointment of suitable coadjutors, that at all costs the further progress of the heresy might be prevented. Charles at once fell in with the suggestion, and on July 22 Alcuin wrote to him again⁴, to propose that copies

¹ *Ep.* 145 [98], 'Et aliud opus...direxi contra adoptionis in Christo adsertores, etiam necdum natum nec in libelli nomen exploratum, sed in scedulis dispersum, donec vestrae bonitatis auctoritas audiat, quid placeat vel quid aliter sit, et remittat mihi, si dignum videtur, ut ordinetur in nomen libelli et dirigatur foras ad legendum.' The treatise was apparently called forth by a letter of Felix, possibly addressed to Elipandus. Cf. *Adv. Fel.* ii. 11: 'De cujus adoptionis ratione in alio libello contra eundem Felicem plenius diximus, respondentes quidem Epistolae illius quam de hac re edidit.' Cf. *ib.* vii. 9, 'in quadam Epistola tua.'

² *Ep.* 202 [142], 'Libello respondere, quem contra nos Felix quidam episcopus vestrae direxit auctoritati.'

³ *Ep.* 148 [99], 'Nuper mihi venit libellus a Felice infelice directus. Cujus propter curiositatem cum paucas paginolas legendo percucurri, inveni pejores hereses vel magis blasphemias, quam ante in ejus scriptis legerem.' Cf. *Adv. Fel. Lib.* vii. i. 1: 'Praefatus Felix mox libellum non epistolari brevitatem succinetum sed sermonum serie prolixum nobis dirigere studuit.' So *Adv. Elip.* i. 16, 'ille non epistolari brevitatem sed libelli prolixitate respondere nisus est.'

⁴ *Ep.* 149 [100]: the date appears from the Psalms quoted as being assigned to the day. Alcuin promised to write some verses,

of Felix's work should be sent to the Pope, to Paulinus of Aquileia, to Theodulph of Orleans, and to Ricbod of Trier, that each might draw up a reply to it. He would do his part, only he must have time to collect and examine the *dicta* of the Fathers on the points in question, a task in which his pupils would assist him. All the replies should be brought to the King on an appointed day; where they agreed in condemning Felix, their teaching might safely be accepted as decisive; if and where they differed, the opinion which could claim the most Scriptural and patristic authority should be preferred.

Meanwhile he was anxiously awaiting Charles' return from Saxony. In August he left Aachen and began to move slowly towards St Lupus at Troyes, staying for a few days on his way first at Arno's monastery of St Amand's, then at his own 'villa' at Baralle, some fifteen miles away, and then at Choisy-au-Bac. He was buoyed up by the hope that in one place or another he might meet his beloved Arno, to whom he wrote, urging him to let him see him once

as Charles desired, replied to his inquiry why the planet Mars had been so long invisible (not without an ironical reference to the omniscience of the *pueri Egyptiaci*), mentioned certain questions on the Psalms which had been asked by 'filia mea, famula vestra devotissima'; and declared himself ready, as Charles advised, to listen to the objections of some critic (a *puer Egyptiacus* again!) on some of his astronomical calculations. He was always eager to learn, and it was so easy to stumble, even for a horse with four legs, far more for a man with only one tongue! Only the mistakes of an amanuensis were sometimes imputed to his master; as had happened in the case of his own treatise on the lunar *saltus*, and might happen even to *pueri Egyptiaci*! And he would prefer that Charles should himself correct mistakes rather than hand over his old master's effusions to carping critics who wished to gain a cheap reputation for acuteness by disparaging the work of others.

again before it was too late, and assuring him that all the possessions of St Martin's were at his service, if only he would come¹. But his hopes were doomed to disappointment. The King's return was still delayed, and still uncertain, Arno was ill², and Alcuin himself was again attacked by the fever which had been troubling him all through the summer³, and which now prevented his paying the visit he had promised to Charles' sister Gisela in her abbey at Chelles⁴. His plans, too, were all unsettled. He wrote once that he would protract his stay at Troyes till the end of September, and spend the first half of October at Ferrières, and again, that he meant to pay St Martin's only a flying visit and return to winter in the east, and perhaps to meet Arno at St Amand's⁵. But his next letter, written on the eve of his departure for Tours, announced that he now intended to spend the winter months there, having apparently abandoned all hope of seeing the King until the following year⁶. By October 6 he had reached the abbey⁷, and when he wrote, probably in November, to say how greatly he was delighted by Arno's defence of Leo III., who had so

¹ *Ep.* 150 [102].

² *Ep.* 151 [Jaffé, *Monumenta Carolina*, 368] (Angilbert to Arno).

³ Cf. *Ep.* 146 [101], 'Febris et infirmitas me fatigatum habet.' So in *Ep.* 149 [100]: 'febricitantem refocilians.'

⁴ *Ep.* 153 [104] (to Arno?).

⁵ *Ep.* 156 [107] (to Arno). *Ep.* 155 [103] (to Charles) is an answer to a letter from the King asking questions as to the disappearance of Mars and other astronomical matters. Alcuin, travelling about without his authorities at hand, found himself unable to give a satisfactory answer, and begged therefore that the first books of Pliny's *Natural History* might be sent to him.

⁶ *Ep.* 157 [106].

⁷ *Ep.* 158 [92], to Arno, giving tidings of a pupil committed by him to Alcuin's care.

much to suffer from 'the sons of discord,' he could only express a hope that they might meet, if not in the course of the winter at St Martin's, at least at St Amand's after Easter¹.

In the meantime the controversy with Felix was occupying much of his attention. Charles had so far accepted his proposals as to send a copy of Felix's treatise not only to Paulinus of Aquileia but to the Pope, and at a Synod held at Rome on October 23, 798, it was solemnly condemned². And Alcuin himself had apparently completed his smaller work, and was engaged in drawing up the *Libri VII adversus Felicem* which was to be his definitive answer to the Adoptionists³, while, perhaps early in 799, he addressed to Elipandus a letter, *calamo charitatis scripta*, urging him to accept the Catholic teaching on the nature of Christ and to induce Felix to do the same⁴. The letter was sent through Leidrad, Bishop of Lyons, Nefridius, Bishop of Narbonne, and Benedict of Aniane⁵, who had

¹ *Ep.* 159 [108].

² For the date cf. Sagmüller, *Die Synoden von Rom, 798, und Aachen, 799*.

³ Cf. the fragmentary *Ep.* 160 [unknown to Jaffé] to Theodulph: 'direximus vo[bis]...libellum f[id]ei catholicae sanctarum scripturarum auctoritati[bus]...m et catholicorum doctorum [testimoniis]..... Sed nuper ab eodem [ante]dicto doctore venit nobis libellus erroris c[alamo] exaratus, cujus libelli responsionem in aliud tempus volente Deo et vita comite distulimus.' The date is uncertain, but is probably not later than the summer of 798. Benedict of Aniane seems to have been the bearer, and this suggests that he took also the copy of the *libellum* for the monks of Gothia which is referred to in *Ep.* 205 [145].

⁴ *Ep.* 166 [115]. It appears from *Ep.* 182 [122] that this letter reached Elipandus late in July.

⁵ Cf. *Ep.* 201 [141], 'epistolam quam...Elipanto olim direxi per vestram sanctam devotionem.' Alcuin was by no means sure whether it would reach its destination: 'ignorans quando vel qualiter sanctitas vestra et bona voluntas quam habetis in Christo haec nostrae parvitatibus dicta recipere velit,' but he begged Elipandus, if he received it, to circulate it among the Spanish prelates.

apparently been charged by Charles with the duty of arresting the heresy in Septimania. The result of their operations soon appeared. Writing to Arno, probably in the early part of March, Alcuin announced an impending disputation at Aachen, where in mid-May he was to encounter Felix, who had promised Leidrad to appear and defend his opinions before the King¹. On March 19 he wrote again, repeating the statement², and perhaps before Easter, March 31, he had reached one of his possessions in Western France³, where he hoped to remain till the beginning of May.

The King meanwhile was preparing for yet another Saxon campaign, but was not too much absorbed in the business to demand of Alcuin why on March 18 the moon had not appeared so large as by the calendar it should have done. Alcuin received the letter as he was journeying through 'the wide and dusty Belgic plains,' and, without rejecting any of the three explanations which the King proposed, suggested three alternatives for consideration. The study of books, he complained, was becoming more and more painful to him, the mists of the Loire and the dust of the Belgic plains being equally trying to his failing sight⁴. Charles replied by sending some calculations of the course of the moon and of the solar cycle, which Alcuin duly acknowledged and approved, sending others in return⁵.

¹ *Ep.* 193 [134].

² *Ep.* 194 [135].

³ *Epp.* 168 [90], 169 [91], to Arno and the monks of Salzburg, dated by Duemmler '799, March,' were accompanied by some Easter hymns, sent at Arno's request, and the writer declared his intention of remaining where he was 'usque in Kalendas Maias.'

⁴ *Ep.* 170 [110].

⁵ *Ep.* 171 [111]. The letter to Charles to which Alcuin here refers, 'quorum unum debitum salutationis impleret officium,' appears to be lost.

But more important matters were meanwhile at a standstill. Alcuin had recently submitted to the King his new treatise in seven books against Felix, that it might be read and approved or sent back for revision. Not a word however had been heard about it; he could only conjecture, so he wrote to Charles, that the fault lay with the lazy letter-carrier or that pressure of business had compelled postponement. The hint apparently was taken,—at any rate his next letter acknowledged the return of the *libellus*. It had been duly read before Charles, and various mistakes had been noted for correction. The faults thus indicated were mere slips of the pen, errors of grammar, omissions in punctuation, and the like, due to the carelessness of scribes, which Alcuin could not wholly counteract in spite of his daily struggle with the *Turonica rusticitas*. But he had a shrewd suspicion that even the matter of the work did not wholly approve itself to the King's mind, since he had been asked to send scholars to justify it¹. His next letters to Arno² and the King³ dealt with another subject.

On April 25 the Pope, Leo III., going in procession to recite the Greater Litany, had been set upon by Paschalis and Campulus, two high officers of his household, dragged from his horse, beaten—an attempt being made, it was said, to mutilate him—and finally im-

¹ *Ep.* 172 [112]. Charles had asked too for a copy of a disputation with a Saracen which Felix had once held. Alcuin had never heard of it before, but sent in all haste to Leidrad to see if he possessed it. He was reminded of a disputation at Pavia between Peter of Pisa and a Jew called Lullus which he had heard as a young man, and of which Angilbert might know something.

² *Ep.* 173 [113].

³ *Ep.* 174 [114].

prisoned in the monastery of St Erasmus on the Coelian Hill. A few days later he escaped, sought the protection of Winigis, the Frankish Duke of Spoleto, and then—whether spontaneously or not does not appear—crossed the Alps, and came to meet the Frankish King at Paderborn¹. It was from the King himself that Alcuin heard of the first of these events, and in his reply, the most famous of all his letters, he insisted that everything else should be postponed and Charles' whole attention devoted to the crisis. *Tres personae*, he wrote, *in mundo altissimae hucusque fuerunt*—the Pope, the Emperor, the King of the Franks. The Pope had been maltreated and driven from his see; the Emperor wickedly blinded and deposed; upon the King of the Franks alone—more powerful, wiser, more illustrious than the others—the safety of the Church now depended, and it demanded his concentrated energies. The feet must yield to the head, the Saxon war must be postponed and if possible a peace arranged, that the King might give his mind intently and exclusively to the settlement of the Roman question.

Alcuin's own thoughts meanwhile must have been largely occupied with the impending disputation with Felix, which took place late in May or early in June in the Palace at Aachen. Alcuin was alone; neither Arno nor Paulinus had come to his assistance. But if

¹ From the first there had been a strong party antagonistic to Leo III., headed by Campulus and Paschalis, one of whom at least was related to the late Pope. The quarrel may have been merely personal; certainly there is no proof that the men who attacked Leo were employed by Charles to act a part, 'to terrify, to paralyse,' so that, driven from place to place, he might find in the Frankish Court his only safe refuge, as is suggested by Ffoulkes in *D.C.B.* s.v. *Leo III.*

unaided he was also independent. He chose his own ground, and challenged his antagonist to show that the Fathers had approved his doctrine; to prove, that is, not the reasonableness of his positions, but the authority for them. The debate was long, lasting indeed six days¹, but at length Felix yielded, and confessed that the passages which Alcuin cited from the writings of Gregory, Leo, Cyril, and others, had hitherto been unknown to him. By these, and by the decision of the recent synod at Rome, he professed himself once more convinced; and the priest who accompanied him, and appeared in Alcuin's eyes a greater heretic than even his master, seems to have joined in his submission. Had they proved obdurate the King would have sent them to be kept in durance by Ricbod of Trier and Arno of Salzburg respectively. As it was they were both confided to the care of Leidrad of Lyons, who, with his former companions, Benedict and Nefridius, was despatched a second time to the south-west to combat the prevailing heresy². Alcuin did his best to furnish them with weapons for the strife. The *Libri VII adversus Felicem* had been completed before the synod at Aachen, but, not having been yet finally approved by the King and his Bishops, had been kept back. Shortly after the disputation, however, Alcuin

¹ 'A secunda usque ad septimam sabbati.' *Vita Alcuini*, 10. Simson (*Jahrbücher*, ii. 180) seems to stand alone in holding this to mean 'on Saturday from the second to the seventh hour,' and not 'from the second to the seventh day of the week.'

² Felix's scruples were not apparently finally quieted. He did not indeed again publicly challenge the accepted doctrine, but Agobard, who was led to doubt the sincerity of his conversion, even in his lifetime, by certain chance sayings of his, discovered after his death some papers which led him to compose yet another treatise against Adoptionism.

once more urged Charles to correct or authorise his work, excusing its discursive style and many repetitions on the ground that he had been obliged to follow the plan of the book he was refuting¹. And on June 26, writing from one of the small possessions of St Martin's, where he was staying on his way back from the Palace, he was able to inform Arno that this treatise was the chief of the weapons with which he had furnished the commissioners². On July 10 he was at Cwentawich, having been obliged by a sharp attack of fever to give up the idea of visiting Adalhard at Corbie³. Thence he went to Chelles to see Gisela, and there received a letter from Charles informing him of the approaching visit of the Pope to the Frankish Court, and inviting him to accompany Charles himself to Rome. This proposal, however, ill-health obliged him to decline⁴. His increasing weakness, indeed, had caused him but a little time before to ask Charles' permission to appoint coadjutors to relieve him of the bulk of the responsibility of his various posts⁵, a request which was readily granted. But in August the King wrote again, rallying him on preferring the smoky roofs of Tours to the gilded splendours of Rome, and giving an account of the Pope, who had come to Paderborn, and in whose train some of Alcuin's pupils were to return to Italy, Charles himself apparently having still some idea of accompanying them⁶. Alcuin, as he confessed in a letter to Arno, would have liked nothing better than to act as papal secretary, assuaging the anger of Leo and

¹ *Ep.* 202 [142].

³ *Epp.* 175 [116], 176 [117].

⁵ *Ep.* 207 [147].

² *Ep.* 207 [147].

⁴ *Ep.* 177 [118].

⁶ *Ep.* 178 [119].

writing in his name letters of exhortation to every corner of the world; but he was prevented both by his own ill-health and by Charles' omission to invite him directly to undertake the task. He was greatly moved by the rumours he heard of proposals to depose the Pope, or to enforce his abdication if he would not clear himself by a solemn oath. For his part, he said, he would hear of no such thing; the Canons of Silvester required seventy-two witnesses for any accusations against the Pope, and others laid down that the Apostolic See was *judicaria*, not *judicanda*. He would reply to Leo's enemies in the words of the Saviour: 'He who is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone.'

But the ways of Charles were not the ways of Alcuin, and when the conference was over, though Leo did indeed return to Rome, it was in company with royal envoys commissioned to examine into the charges brought against him. Alcuin in September upbraided Adalhard for his failure to send him word of the doings at Paderborn; he himself was hastening home to Tours.

Meanwhile Elipandus of Toledo, now in his eighty-second year, was lashing himself into a fury over the letter which he had received from Alcuin at the end of July. He could not find words to express his disdain for the 'pitchy heretic' and 'son of hell-fire,' to whom he wrote an answer full of gall and bitterness, reproaching him with being the master of twenty thousand slaves, and reminding him that, even if Spain did really stand alone in maintaining the doctrine of Adoptionism, it was the broad and not the narrow way that led to

destruction¹. He sent the letter, on October 23, to Felix, requesting him to forward it in the first place to the Frankish King, so that it did not for some time come into Alcuin's hands².

Early in 800 a rumour reached Tours that Charles was coming westward to pray at the shrines of saints and martyrs, and that St Martin's was one of the places he intended to visit³. But as yet all was vague. Alcuin had been summoned by Charles himself to meet Angilbert at Chelles, but whether the meeting was to precede or to follow the royal visit he did not know; if it took place before the King's arrival he hoped to meet Arno (then apparently at St Amand's) at Choisy-au-Bac, perhaps, or at Nogent-sur-Marne, where there was a small property belonging to St Martin's⁴. Meanwhile he was engaged as usual in work for others. For Charles he was revising the text of the Old and New Testaments, and this occupied so much of his time that his progress with the Commentary on the Gospel of St John, which he was compiling simul-

¹ The letter was addressed 'Alcuino non Christi ministro sed Antiphrasi Beati foetidissimi discipulo,... novo Arrio, sanctorum patrum...doctrinis contrario.' So later: 'tu intromittis doctrinam diabolicam de suem illam Antiphrasium Beatum exortam' (*sic*).

² *Epp.* 182 [122], 183 [123].

It was perhaps about this date that Alcuin received from Arno, then in Rome, a disquieting account of Leo III. and of the state of affairs in that city—so disquieting indeed that he considered it desirable to burn the letter, lest scandal should arise, having allowed no one but Candidus to read it: cf. *Ep.* 184 [127]. The action was characteristic: cf. *Ep.* 58 [48], 'si non confunderemur de dissensionis nota,' and *Ep.* 223 [227]: 'quicquid secus agamus, quam regularis vita definiat, remaneat apud nos tantum.' The date of the letter is uncertain: Hauck places it early in 800; it seems possible that it may even be subsequent to Alcuin's visit to St Riquier's.

³ *Ep.* 164 [132], to one of the King's daughters.

⁴ *Ep.* 165 [133].

taneously for Gisela and Rotrud, was but slow. A part was sent to them in Lent¹, but the rest did not follow for nearly a year. A little later apparently he was at St Riquier's, where Charles was spending Easter², and here, and not at Chelles, the appointed meeting with Angilbert took place, one of its results being a promise on Alcuin's part to rewrite the life of the founder of the monastery in a form more suited to the taste of the age than the rude biography which the monks already possessed³. Then he returned to Tours, there to await the King, who was proceeding along the coast with a view to taking measures for its defence against the inroads of the Northmen⁴. Charles arrived at St Martin's with his Queen towards the end of May, having appointed the abbey as a general rendezvous for his sons. It was on this occasion, according to the anonymous biographer, that Alcuin—marking the contrast between the haughty demeanour of the princes Pippin and Charles and the humility of their younger brother Louis—foretold that once again the humble would be exalted, and Louis alone would live to wear his father's crown. It is more certain that he seized the opportunity afforded by the King's presence at St Martin's to secure from him a general confirmation of all the possessions of the Abbey, and certain privileges for the cell which he had recently established at Cormery, some eight miles from

¹ *Ep.* 195 [136], 'his sanctissimis diebus.' It does not seem certain that *Ep.* 196 [137] was written to acknowledge the receipt of this first instalment, as Duemmler assumes; it may perhaps have been the letter which first induced Alcuin to undertake the work.

² April 19.

³ *Ep.* 306 [238].

⁴ Cf. Alcuin's reference to a raid on the islands off the coast of Aquitaine in *Ep.* 184 [127].

Tours, and filled with monks trained in the ascetic school of Benedict of Aniane¹. Charles seems to have remained for some time at St Martin's: one chronicler relates that 'all the dukes and counts of Brittany' came to greet him and bring him gifts; another, whose story can scarcely be accepted, tells of a division of the kingdom between the princes made by Charles before the family gathering broke up; it is known that Liutgarde, the last of the great monarch's consorts, was seized with sudden illness while still at Tours, dying on June 4, and was buried in the abbey where the huge 'Tour Charlemagne' still stands². Then Charles went back to Aachen, and in August, at a great diet, announced his intention of proceeding to Rome.

Meanwhile Alcuin was engaged in a last struggle with Adoptionism. Felix, who under Leidrad's care had been induced to publish a formal renunciation of his errors, had visited St Martin's, and the abbot had been delighted to find in him no trace of his old animosity. The Adoptionist teaching, moreover, had been yet again refuted by Paulinus of Aquileia in a somewhat belated treatise of three books, which commanded Alcuin's utmost admiration. But Elipandus remained still unconvinced, and his reply to Alcuin's letter seemed to call for some rejoinder. So Alcuin drew up yet one more treatise against the heretics, this time in four books, *Adversus Elipandum Libri IV*, and entrusted

¹ Cf. *Ep.* 184 [127] and Sickel, *Regesten*, K. 162, 163, and 166. Alcuin was carrying out a scheme which Itherius had originated, but had not lived to execute.

² *Ep.* 197 [138] is a letter of consolation addressed to Charles on the occasion, to which *Ep.* 198 [124] also may refer, though Jaffé and Sickel hold that Alcuin is there speaking of the deaths of Eric and Gerold.

it to the indefatigable three, Leidrad, Nefridius, and Benedict, who once again were commissioned by Charles to preach and teach against Adoptionism. In a prefatory letter addressed to the commissioners he defended himself against the charge of avarice implied in Elipandus' sneer at 'the lord of twenty thousand serfs,' and solemnly declared that the welfare of the Church of Christ had been his object both in originally accepting Charles' invitation to France and in finally resolving to end his days there.

The commissioners were authorised to revise or even, if they thought proper, to suppress the treatise against Elipandus, but Alcuin was anxious that if it was used it should be bound in a single volume with transcripts (which he supplied) of his own original letter to Elipandus, of the Archbishop's reply and the note to Felix which accompanied it, and of the confession of faith made by Felix after his recantation at Aachen, and that, while copies might be given to any who desired them, the ms. itself should remain in the commissioners' keeping. He had written primarily, he added, less for the sake of Elipandus himself, whose great age made his death at any moment probable, and who besides was somewhat difficult of access, than for the men and women of Septimania and the Spanish March, to whom Leidrad and his companions were to preach¹.

In the autumn Charles marched into Italy. Grimoald of Beneventum had long been chafing under the yoke of the Franks, and an expedition under Pippin

¹ The story that Elipandus eventually abandoned Adoptionism is probably only a pious invention.

was sent against him. But the King himself had other work on hand. He deemed it essential that Leo III. should once and for all meet the charges against him which Arno and his fellow-commissioners had been investigating. For to Charles the Pope, as Pope, was not necessarily righteous, nor to be treated as if he were righteous. It could not indeed be tolerated that a ruffianly assault should vacate the papal chair; it might be politically necessary that its present occupant should be securely reestablished; but at least there must be a show of investigation and acquittal. King and Pope met at Nomentum on November 23. On the following day they made a triumphal entry into Rome, and just a week later a great Council of Franks and Romans, laymen and ecclesiastics, assembled at St Peter's.

Charles opened the proceedings. The accusations against Leo were recited, but the accusers, who indeed were probably absent, failed to substantiate them. A long and acrimonious discussion followed. The proposal to depose the Pope was heard once more¹, but Leo's supporters, among whom were Riculf of Mainz and Theodulph of Orleans², won the day. It was decided however that he should formally deny on oath the truth of the allegations against him. Accordingly on December 23 he solemnly swore that he was innocent, as Pope Pelagius had done in 555, protesting at the same time that his action should not be drawn into precedent.

Two days later, when Charles was hearing the mass

¹ Cf. *Ep.* 212 [157], and Hauck, ii. 103, n. 4.

² Cf. *Epp.* 212 [157] and 225 [166], praising their conduct.

for Christmas Day in St Peter's, the rehabilitated Pontiff placed a crown of gold upon his head, and—while Franks and Romans joined in acclaiming 'the most pious and august Emperor, crowned of God'—knelt and 'adored' him as his predecessors had 'adored' other Emperors in ages past¹. And thus the Western Empire was revived².

Meanwhile, in the distant abbey at Tours, Alcuin, working hard at his Commentary on St John³, and perhaps at his revision of the Bible, paused now and then to listen to tidings, direct or indirect, of his royal patron, to write to him letters of affectionate warning, or ask of him favours for himself or for others, or to urge the Frankish Bishops in his train to do their best to heal the schism in the Church at Rome. On one occasion Witto was despatched to convey some private requests to the King, and he had scarcely started when the news of the death of Maganfrid evoked another letter, pleading the cause of the brethren of St Peter's at Tours, who had some petition, connected apparently with the dead man's estate, which Alcuin wished Charles to grant⁴. Maganfrid had died in Beneventum, and Alcuin was urgent that Charles should abandon his expedition against its duke, and leave him to the

¹ On the same day Charles received from the Patriarch of Jerusalem the keys of the City, the Holy Sepulchre, the Mount of Sion, and the Hill of Calvary, together with a banner, in recognition of his supremacy.

² The motives of the various persons concerned need not be discussed here. It cannot be inferred from Alcuin's use of such expressions as *imperiale regnum* (*Ep.* 121 [78]), that he either expected or desired the elevation of his patron.

³ *Ep.* 209 [149], to *Calvinus presbyter* in England, was written while it was in progress.

⁴ *Ep.* 211 [156].

divine vengeance, fearing perhaps that Beneventan pestilence against which he warned a certain Count Chrodgar in a later letter¹. His pupils in Rome proved but faithless correspondents², but he heard of Riculf's resistance in the discussions at the end of 800 to the proposal to depose the Pope, or force him to resign, and thanked him for it³, and when at last he sent to Gisela and Rotrud the remainder of his Commentary on St John he had been delighted by the tidings of the rehabilitation of Leo III., the coronation of Charles, and the arrival of the envoys from the Patriarch of Jerusalem⁴. The news was confirmed by Witto, who returned from Rome in the spring, leaving his companions with Pippin⁵, and Alcuin wrote to the younger Charles to congratulate him on his coronation as King, which had taken place on the memorable Christmas Day, 800⁶.

He himself was brought very near to death soon after Easter by a violent attack of fever, and when the crisis was past, though out of danger, he was sensibly weaker⁷, and was convinced that the end could not now be very far off⁸. But, though the prospect of approach-

¹ *Ep.* 224 [165].

² *Ep.* 215 [160].

³ *Ep.* 212 [157].

⁴ *Ep.* 214 [159].

⁵ *Ep.* 216 [161].

⁶ *Ep.* 217 [162]. Letters to Charles the Great, which must surely have been evoked by these events, are not discoverable.

⁷ *Ep.* 218 [163] (to Arno, desiring to know the result of the Beneventan trouble, and the terms made between Leo III. and the Romans). Cf. *Ep.* 221 [164] (to Angilbert), which, with *Ep.* 220 [250] (to Adalhard) and *Ep.* 219 [249] (to the monks of Lérins), seems to belong to this year. A reference to violent attacks of fever is regarded by Duemmler as presumptive evidence for dating a letter 801.

⁸ Cf. *Ep.* 225 [166] (congratulating Theodulph of Orleans on his

ing death filled him with an anxious longing to prepare himself by strict mortifications and devotions, he was not too self-absorbed to take a keen interest still in the welfare of old friends and pupils. Eanbald II. received from him about this time a present of wine, and a hundred pounds of lead with which to cover the bell-tower of the church at York, and with them a letter of exhortation in which, while urging the adoption of the Roman *Ordo*, he declined to compile a new Missal for use in the Cathedral¹. And when tidings came that Æthelhard of Canterbury, with other notable Anglo-Saxons, was on his way to Rome to secure a final settlement of the Lichfield controversy, Alcuin sent his own horse to meet him, with a saddle such as ecclesiastical dignitaries in France were wont to use, ordered him to be welcomed with honour and hospitable entertainment at the cell of S. Josse-sur-Mer, granted by Charles to his old master for this very purpose of receiving travellers, and furnished him with an introduction to the King, only requesting that neither he nor his companions would scandalise the Frankish Court by the luxury of their apparel². But he was determined to rid himself if possible of all secular obligations and responsibilities, and as soon as he heard of Charles' safe

conduct at Rome and on his elevation to the archiepiscopate): 'Nam me tacito pede curva senectus festinare cogit ad praesentiam judicis mei'; and *Ep.* 228 [169]: 'scitote cotidie infirmitates crescere et variis corpus debilitare doloribus, et Dominum pulsantem januas.' So *Ep.* 232 [173]: 'scio diem adpropinquasse meum.'

¹ *Ep.* 226 [167].

² *Epp.* 230 [171] (to Æthelhard), 231 [172] (to Charles, commending Æthelhard), and 232 [173] (to Eanbald II., describing these events, and sympathising with his troubles, though they were perhaps due in part to his protection of King Eadwulf's enemies. Cf. *Ep.* 233 [174] (to Cuculus), where Eanbald is blamed also for having an excessive retinue, burdensome to the monasteries he visited).

return from Italy he took the necessary steps. Witto was despatched to meet the King with presents and a letter reminding him how, nearly five years before, only the royal persuasions had induced Alcuin to abandon his project of devoting himself entirely to religion and accept the abbacy of St Martin's, and how, four years later, he had declared that his wish was still unaltered. Now he begged that, though remaining at Tours—he had given up all thought of Fulda, where he had once hoped to end his days¹—he might be enabled, by some arrangement which he would not presume to dictate, to spend his few remaining years in preparing for the end². The request was granted. The coadjutors appointed to assist him after the Synod of Aachen, or their successors, took over the whole secular responsibilities of his various posts, though he retained their titular incumbency. He was able to impart the grateful news in the letter to Eanbald II. which described the visit of Æthelhard to S. Josse³, and he repeated it with exultation in writing to many other friends⁴. Nor did he ever leave his monastery again. Charles indeed summoned him to Court, but he did not go. He alleged his daily increasing infirmities as his excuse⁵, and sought the good offices of Gundrada to

¹ Cf. *Vit. Alc.* c. 11.

² *Ep.* 229 [170].

³ *Ep.* 232 [173], 'Sicut Cuculo praecepi tuae dicere beatitudini factum habeo'; explained by *Ep.* 233 [174], 'Nos vero, sicut dixi Cuculo, deposito onere pastoralis curae, quieti sedemus apud Sanctum Martinum.'

⁴ Cf. *Ep.* 234 [175] (to Leo III.): 'Ego...saecularis nutricii occupatione liberatus.' *Ep.* 235 [246] (to an unknown friend): 'negotiis saecularibus utcumque me liberatum habeo.' *Ep.* 236 [176] (to an Archbishop): 'ego...saeculi occupationibus depositis.' *Epp.* 237 [177], and 240 [198]: 'militaris cingulo laboris deposito,' &c., &c.

⁵ *Ep.* 240 [198].

appease, if necessary, the royal anger¹. He desired indeed beyond measure to see his beloved Arno before he died, and as the end drew near sent to him letter after letter of urgent entreaty that he would come to Tours². Once Arno wrote that he would come if possible; once, perhaps, he really came on a flying visit³. But for the most part he was absorbed by his multifarious duties as Archbishop, and, from 802 onwards, as one of the imperial *missi*, duties which Alcuin feared might impair his spiritual well-being, though he was ready to acknowledge that the Emperor would find it hard indeed to secure elsewhere such a conscientious servant. Even correspondence between the friends was rendered difficult by the faithlessness of the letter-carriers; it was impossible to know sometimes for months whether any given missive had reached its destination⁴. Nevertheless Alcuin persevered, and sent not only letters but treatises; on May 24, 802, *e.g.*, his little work on *Ecclesiastes*⁵, and later in the year a copy of the exhortation to confession which he had once addressed to 'the sons of St Martin'⁶.

It was the bearer of this last treatise who took to Charles Alcuin's most important theological work, the *Libellus de Sancta Trinitate*, a book intended to prove the contention of St Augustine that the art of dialectics, which Charles had been eager to foster, was essential to

¹ *Ep.* 241 [199].

² Cf. *Epp.* 239 [194], 252—254 [195, 188, 189], 258 [192], 259 [234], 263 [262], and 264 [202].

³ *Ep.* 260 [235]: dated by Duemmler 'c. 798—c. 802.'

⁴ Cf. *Ep.* 254 [189].

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ This was also included in the volume of miscellanies sent with *Ep.* 259 [234] by the hand of Fredegis.

the due exposition of dogma¹. Nor perhaps were these the only fruits of his unwonted leisure, for the two *cartulae missales* sent to the monks of Fulda and of St Vedast respectively were not improbably drawn up in 801 or 802, while his treatises on 'The Virtues and Vices' and on 'The Nature of the Soul' have been ascribed by some authorities to the same period².

Thus he spent the last years of his life—assiduous in his devotions, unwearied in his task of preparing for death, yet ready now, as ever, to comply with the request of any who begged for some word of exhortation, or encouragement, or warning. But the calm of this peaceful if painful life was once rudely interrupted by an event which cannot be precisely dated, but which may confidently be assigned to the period after his final withdrawal from all secular responsibilities.

Witto and Fredegis had been recalled to the Palace School after Charles' return from Italy, and were there carrying on the work which Alcuin had begun. From time to time they received from their old master letters of warning against the corruptions of the Court and of exhortation to a chaste and upright life, with messages, and sometimes presents, for Charles. But a letter addressed to both of them in common, not long after they had left Tours for Aachen, was of a more stirring nature. The Abbot of St Martin's, writing in hot haste to anticipate possible opposition, abridged his customary admonitions to unwonted brevity, and hurried on to the

¹ Cf. *Epp.* 257, 258 [191, 192]. The book seems to have been despatched in anticipation of the Synod held at Aachen in October 802.

² Werner, *Alcuin*, 52 n.

matter which most concerned him. A trouble had arisen, he said, between Theodulph of Orleans and certain monks of St Martin's, in connection with a fugitive clerk, who, bursting his prison bonds at Orleans, had taken sanctuary at Tours and appealed to the Emperor, claiming a safe conduct to his presence. Theodulph had at once demanded his surrender, and it had been granted, but the men to whom he was delivered, fearing, it was said, some attack upon the road, had let him go outside the doors of the church, whereupon he had again taken sanctuary. Theodulph then despatched armed men to recover his prisoner, and on the following Sunday eight of them, accompanied by the Archbishop of Tours, entered the church and pressed up to the altar rails to seize him. The monks, fearing sacrilege, repelled them, and meanwhile a crowd, which had gathered on the report that the men of Orleans had come to profane St Martin's by force, began to enter the building. It was with difficulty that the brethren induced them to withdraw, and rescued Theodulph's emissaries from their attack. Such, Alcuin declared, was the true story of the affair, but he knew, from Theodulph's own letters to him, that the Orleans version was very different, and replete with exaggerations, not to say inventions. Witto and Fredegis must therefore demand to be confronted with the indignant prelate when he came to lay his complaint before the Emperor. They must convert defence into attack, and impugn his conduct, not only in seeking to violate sanctuary that he might subject the fugitive to the punishment from which he had fled, but in ignoring the 'appeal to Cæsar,' and in sentencing a man who

had already confessed and professed penitence for his crime to an excessive penalty. Theodulph had declared that sinners should be excluded from the church, how then could any priest set foot within it? He had called the fugitive priest a devil, but St Paul said 'Judge no man before the time.' And as for the privilege of sanctuary, it was maintained alike by civil and by canon law, by the Theodosian Code not less than by the Council of Orleans. Even Alaric respected the churches of Rome, the Jews had their cities of refuge, the pagan Romans themselves recognised in their own altars the sacredness of sanctuary. Were the churches of God inferior to the temples of Jupiter or Juno? The Emperor, Alcuin was persuaded, would not suffer himself to be thus misled¹.

But the Emperor took another view. In spite of Alcuin's haste Theodulph's letter of complaint was the first to reach the Court, and a comparison of the two proved, in Charles' eyes, decidedly unfavourable to Alcuin's. It seemed to have been written in anger, and to aim at shielding the fugitive clerk by accusing the prelate who had judged him—'a proceeding forbidden alike by human and by divine law.' Moreover the parallel between the appeal of the clerk to Charles and the *Cesarem appello* of St Paul carried no weight, for in the present case the accused, unlike the Apostle, had been already publicly tried and condemned. And again, the monks of St Martin, in refusing to surrender him, had disobeyed the Emperor himself, since the demand had been made under his express authority.

¹ *Ep.* 245 [180]. Cf. *Ep.* 246 [181] (to an unnamed Bishop; perhaps, as Sickel suggests, Hildibald of Köln).

On this point, Charles wrote, their offence was clear, even if they had played no part in the riot, and for it they must answer before the imperial tribunal as the *missus* who brought his letter might direct¹.

The *missus* was one Teotbert, who remained in Tours for nineteen days, busily engaged in chastising the offenders. Some were beaten, others thrown into prison; some were put on oath, some were cited to the imperial court. Alcuin sent one of his pupils to Arno to be out of danger², and wrote again in anguish of soul to Charles. He defended the monks of St Martin's against the accusations heaped upon them, and appealed to Witto's testimony to their godly life. So far, he said, as he could learn, not one of them had been implicated in the riot; as for himself, he could scarcely need to say, not all the gold in France could have tempted him, an old man preparing for his death, to sanction such a thing by word or deed. The blame rested really first on the careless warder who, by letting his prisoner escape, had been the cause of so much scandal; then on the men who came in arms from Orleans and so provoked the rabble of the city, worked on perhaps *inter pocula* by the fugitive himself, to resist an attempt, as they thought, to violate St Martin's; and lastly on the Archbishop of Tours, who, no doubt from pure thoughtlessness, had entered the church under the very eyes of the people, with the eight men who were believed to have come to seize their victim by

¹ *Ep.* 247 [182]. Charles also commented in scathing terms on the evil reputation under which the abbey had long laboured, and the disappointment of his hopes that Alcuin's rule would lead to reformation.

² *Ep.* 248 [183].

force. As for the monks, who had rushed out of the refectory merely to learn why the bells were ringing, their sole share in the whole proceeding had been an attempt to still the tumult and shelter the messengers of Theodulph within the monastery walls. Only some boys belonging to the school, from sheer love of mischief, had joined in the riot, and they had now been duly summoned to answer for their fault at Aachen¹.

How the matter ended is unknown, but, whatever the issue, the episode was painful in the extreme to the sensitive Abbot, coming as it did after long years of faithful and devoted service to the Emperor.

Of the closing days of his life there is little more to tell. The last letters which can be even approximately dated are three to Arno, one written apparently on April 13, 803², one rather earlier in the same year³, and one, accompanying a present of two vases, to be used in remembrance of the giver, which was sent perhaps a few months later⁴.

When the New Year came it was plain that his strength was ebbing fast, but his Lenten observances were as strict as ever. On the evening of Ascension Day, however, he was prostrated by a paralytic stroke. For a week he lost the power of speech. But on May 17 he spoke once more, and chanted the antiphon *O clavis David!* Two days later he died, just as he had hoped to do, as Whitsunday was dawning. That night, it was reported, Archbishop Joseph of Tours observed a

¹ *Ep.* 249 [184].

² *Ep.* 265 [203].

³ *Ep.* 264 [202] (the bearer was Adalwin, Bishop of Regensburg, who had visited St Martin's).

⁴ *Ep.* 266 [204].

globe of fire hovering over the monastery; and far away in Italy a hermit saw in a vision the soul of the dead Abbot borne to Heaven by a company of saints who, like him, had died as deacons.

He was buried with every honour in the Church of St Martin's, the Archbishop overruling his express desire that he might lie outside its walls; and this epitaph, which he had himself composed, marked his grave:

Hic, rogo, pauxillum veniens subsiste viator,
Et mea scrutare pectore dicta tuo,
Ut tua deque meis agnoscas fata figuris :
Vertitur o species, ut mea, sicque tua.
Quod nunc es fueram, famosus in orbe viator,
Et quod nunc ego sum, tuque futurus eris.
Delicias mundi casso sectabar amore,
Nunc cinis et pulvis, vermibus atque cibus.
Quapropter potius animam curare memento
Quam carnem, quoniam haec manet, illa perit.
Cur tibi rura paras? quam parvo cernis in antro
Me tenet hic requies: sic tua parva fiet.
Cur Tyrio corpus inhias vestirier ostro
Quod mox esuriens pulvere vermibus edet?
Ut flores pereunt vento veniente minaci,
Sic tua namque caro gloria tota perit.
Tu mihi redde vicem, lector, rogo, carminis hujus,
Et dic: "Da veniam, Christe, tuo famulo."
Obsecro, nulla manus violet pia jura sepulcri,
Personet angelica donec ab arce tuba :
"Qui jacet in tumulo terrae de pulvere surge!
Magnus adest judex milibus innumeris."
Alchuine nomen erat sophiam mihi semper amanti,
Pro quo funde preces mente, legens titulum.

CHAPTER VIII.

ALCUIN'S WORK : (i) THEOLOGICAL.

ALCUIN is famous mainly as a teacher. But in his eyes all secular knowledge was but a stepping-stone to the knowledge of things divine. Theology for him was always the crowning science, and his theological treatises form the bulk of his writings. They may be classified under three heads, as exegetical, noral, and dogmatic.

Under the first head must be ranked his numerous commentaries on the Bible. In composing these his last desire was to lay before the reader his own original ideas about the text under consideration. He sought rather to collect the best thoughts from the writings of earlier commentators—‘culling the beautiful flowers from patristic gardens’—and to weave them, here abridged and there expanded, into a continuous exposition of the threefold sense of Scripture, literal, allegorical, and moral. Sometimes he quoted word for word, and produced little more than a mosaic of patristic citations; at other times, especially in developing the allegorical significance of his subject, he gave free play to his fancy in characteristic Anglo-Saxon fashion.

The commentary on Genesis took the form of questions and answers; Sigulf, to whom the treatise was dedicated, being the interrogator, and the answers being

derived in the main from Jerome and, in the concluding chapter, *De Benedictionibus Patriarcharum*, from Augustine¹.

The exposition of certain Psalms—the seven Penitential Psalms, Psalm cxviii, and the fifteen ‘Psalms of Degrees’—owed its existence to a request of Arno, with which Alcuin complied by recasting or abridging what Augustine had written on the subject, with some additions of his own².

The commentary on Ecclesiastes, again, dedicated to Onias, Fredegis, and Witto, was based on Jerome; the commentary on the Song of Solomon for the most part on the larger work of Bede³; Alcuin’s own *penchant* for the mysteries of numbers finding characteristic expression in a separate treatise in the shape of a letter to *Daphnis* on the sixty wives and eighty concubines⁴.

The only other treatise on the Old Testament ascribed to Alcuin, a commentary on the Book of Proverbs⁵, is no longer known.

His chief work on the New Testament was the

¹ Hauck, ii. 137, n. 2, argues from the expression ‘qui saeculi occupationibus distrahimur et diversis itinerum molestiis fatigamur’ that the Commentary must have been written while Alcuin was still at the Palace School; but the wording of the passage does not seem to exclude the period 796–801, previous to his abdication of all secular duties. Werner, *op. cit.*, 125, apparently relying on the same passage, asserts, without sufficient evidence, that the treatise itself was written on a journey.

² Hauck notes that, in his explanation of the Penitential Psalms, he seems to have followed no definite model: elsewhere he adhered closely to Augustine: the elaborate explanation of the number fifteen in the Psalms of Degrees, cited by Werner, *op. cit.*, 137, however, is a typical example of his own mystical treatment of numbers.

³ Werner, *op. cit.*, 139.

⁴ *Ep.* 133 [259].

⁵ *Vit. Alc.* 21.

commentary on St John's Gospel, which he dedicated to Gisela and Rotrud. Here Augustine was once more his chief guide, Gregory, Bede, occasionally Ambrose, and once Jerome, being also cited; and the commentary was composed to an unusual extent of literal quotations from these writers¹; but again the mystic treatment of numbers was largely Alcuin's own.

For the Epistles to Titus and Philemon Jerome, for the Epistle to the Hebrews Chrysostom, in a Latin version, supplied him with most of his matter; his commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians is unknown; in dealing with the Apocalypse he relied largely on Ambrosius Autbertus, an almost contemporary authority, besides citing Bede, Jerome, Augustine, and other less known writers², and himself displaying here and there his natural inclination to fantastic exegesis.

Throughout this mass of commentation there is scarcely a trace of original thought except in the ingenious elaboration of numerical mysteries; and yet in its method if not in its matter it has a certain importance of its own. For the system which Alcuin adopted, the combination and development or abridgement of accredited authorities, became the model for commentators in the Church at large in the ensuing century.

¹ Cf. Alcuin's own characteristic account of his work in *Ep.* 213 [158], where he compares himself to the doctors who 'ex multorum speciebus pigmentorum in salutem poscentis quoddam medicamenti solent componere genus, nec se ipsos fateri præsument creatores herbarum vel aliarum specierum ex quarum compositione salus efficitur aegrotantium, sed ministros esse in colligendo et in unum... conficiendo corpus.'

² Victorius, Tichonius, Primasius. Werner, *op. cit.*, 155. The commentary as now known is incomplete, breaking off at c. xii. v. 9.

His moral writings, though a more personal note is struck in the gentle piety which suffuses them, have little claim to greater originality. The treatise *De Virtutibus et Vitiis*, composed for the use of Count Wido, was based largely on the Sermons of St Augustine. Starting with the assertion that the only true wisdom is to be found in obedient service to God, Alcuin proceeded to enumerate and describe the graces and actions pleasing in His sight—faith, hope, and charity, peaceableness, pity, patience, forgiveness, humility, purity, reverence, justice: freedom from deceit, slander, envy, hatred, pride, and vainglory: contrition, confession, penitence, fasting, almsgiving, and the study of the Scriptures—urging his readers to perseverance in them all, and to avoidance of the chief vices—pride, gluttony, lust, avarice, anger, sloth, listlessness, ungodly sorrow, and vainglory.

The brief essay *De Animae Ratione*, dedicated to Eulalia, reverted to the same subject. The soul, said Alcuin, following the teaching of Augustine, comprises three parts, rational, irascible, concupiscible. Of these the rational part, peculiar to man, is designed to keep in check the other two, which are common to the whole animal creation. The four capital virtues—wisdom, which distinguishes good and evil: justice, which enforces the performance of duty towards God and man: temperance, which checks the impulses of appetite and anger: fortitude, which bravely withstands misfortune and adversity—harmonised and elevated by the supreme Christian virtue of charity, enable the reason to maintain its control of the lower elements. Otherwise desire leads to gluttony, immorality, and avarice: anger pro-

duces listlessness and melancholy: and the rational soul is led astray into the paths of pride and vain-glory.

Thence Alcuin passed on to consider the nature of the soul as made in the image of the Creator: its duties, viz. to love *quod supra se est, et id quod juxta se est, et id quod ipsa est, et id quod sub se est*, i.e. God, one's neighbour, the soul itself, and the body: its triple functions, understanding, will, memory; the character of intellectual concepts; and the meaning of the death of the soul. Of the origin of the soul, he added, in spite of the many conjectures made by pagans and Christians alike, nothing certain can be said, it remains a mystery known to God alone¹. All however are agreed that the soul comes from God, though, being capable of sin, it is no part of the Divine Nature; that it is impalpable and invisible, and immortal also in the sense that it cannot cease to exist; and that it can never be freed from the taint of original sin except by the mediation of Christ, Who assumed human nature in its entirety, body and soul alike, because it was in its entirety that it first sinned².

The last of Alcuin's moral writings that calls for notice is the brief exhortation to confession addressed to the *Pueri Sancti Martini* at Tours. All sins, Alcuin urged, are already known to God; to confess is not to

¹ He had read at York Augustine's treatise on the subject addressed to Jerome, and Jerome's brief reply, but he had no copies of these at Tours, nor had he ever met with other works on the subject ascribed to Augustine: 'de quantitate animae liber unus; de immortalitate animae liber unus; de duabus animis liber unus; de immortalitate animae et ejus origine libri quatuor'; possibly they might be at Aachen, if so he would be grateful for transcripts.

² The treatise concludes with two poems on the subject under discussion, a *Carmen Elegiacum* and a *Carmen Adonicum*.

reveal them, yet confession and penitence secure their pardon, and the worse the sinner, the more manifold his sins, the more need is there of confession and the greater is its efficacy. If we accuse ourselves now Satan will not accuse us before the Throne of Judgment: confession is the medicine of the soul, which heals the wounds of sin; it is a sacrifice desired by God that He may reward it with forgiveness; and every Christian is in duty bound to practise it with diligence¹.

The bulk of Alcuin's dogmatic writings is comprised in his treatises against the Adoptionists. The origin of Adoptionism is wrapped in obscurity. It has been held that it was merely a revival of the older Nestorian heresy, that it was the product of the controversy with Migetius, or that it owed its existence as a formulated doctrine only to the determination of the leaders of the Spanish Church to establish the orthodoxy of every detail in their national liturgy². But whatever doubts

¹ Alcuin's biographical works have much in common with his moral treatises, being written mainly with a view to the edification of his readers. He abridged the life of St Martin by Sulpicius Severus; at the request of Angilbert he rewrote the life of St Riquier, and, for the monks of St Vedast, the life of their founder, adding to each a homily on the life and labours of the Saint. His biography of St Willibrord, in prose and verse, was a more original composition, and was adopted as a model by the biographer of Liudger, but here too the edification rather than the information of the reader was his primary object, and like most of his contemporaries he readily accepted an abundance of unauthenticated miracles and prodigies.

² Hauck, ii. 290, n. 2. Dorner, *Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, Div. ii., Vol. i., p. 249, observes that it was neither an unvanquished remainder of Nestorianism nor a revival of an old heresy by men ignorant of what had gone before, but arose from the position of the Christological problem as it existed precisely in the 8th century. He notes, as possible factors in the development of the mode of thought which gave rise to it, the conflict which the Church had waged in Spain against Priscillianism and Sabellianism, and in Africa against Monophysitism, and perhaps the survival in N. Africa

there may be as to its origin, there can be little or none as to its nature. It was, in its reasoned form, the last of many attempts to uproot monophysitism, an endeavour to vindicate in the sphere of the Personality of Christ that same duality which had already been established in regard to His Will and to His Nature. The Adoptionists did not indeed embrace the Nestorian error of a double personality, but they insisted on the twofold aspect of the single personality, which must, in their view, inevitably result from the twofold position of Christ as at once Creator and creature, Son of God and Son of man. For they were intent on maintaining the absolute completeness of the Human Nature of Christ, a completeness on which the efficacy of His work depended, but which the prevailing Christology, in their opinion, tended to obscure¹. And they held that to that completeness personality, the possession of an *Ego*, was essential. The Human Nature of Christ was no mere *thing*, any more than the Divine Nature; He assumed a *homo*, not merely *natura humana*; in His humanity, no less than in His divinity, He was a Son. This common Sonship at once marked the personality of the Human Nature and formed the bond of union between it and the Divine Nature. For the *Ego* of the Divine Nature, the *singularitas personae filii Dei*, was

of the doctrines of the School of Antioch. Even Hauck (ii. 294), who holds that Adoptionism itself began with Elipandus' defence of the Mozarabic liturgy, considers that with Felix it was only a consequence and not the foundation of his religious convictions.

¹ Elipandus in his letter to Alcuin (*Ep.* 183 [123] c. 15) accused him of denying the real humanity of Christ: 'in magno sacrilegio se versari hæreticorum manifestat impietas cum sub specie Deitatis honorandæ humanæ carnis in Christo negant veritatem, et religiose existimant credendum si dicatur in Salvatore nostro verum non esse quod salvat.' Alcuin of course indignantly repelled the charge.

also the *Ego* of the Human Nature, one and the same *Ego* appertaining to both Natures, raising both to personality, and perfecting and fulfilling the idea of each. But they distinguished sharply between the Divine Nature and the Divine *Ego*, the latter alone being allotted to the humanity, which in virtue thereof became the Son of Man¹. Thus 'the Human Nature lost nothing at all of its completeness or of that which belonged to it, for the Divine *Ego*, abstracted from the Divine Nature, did nothing more than perfectly supply the place of the human *Ego*².' And, while, by the Divine Nature Christ was the Son of God, by the Human Nature He was the Son of Man; and the Son of Man was of a different nature from the Son of God, a created being of another substance than the divinity. But, if this was so, to insist on the unity of the Person in such a manner as to maintain that in His Human Nature He was strictly the proper and natural Son of God was to confound the two Natures and deny that any difference existed between God and man, the Word and the flesh, the Creator and the creature, Him who assumes and that which is assumed³. The titles of the Divine Nature might indeed be transferred to the Human Nature, and so 'the Man Jesus' might be called God, and Son of God; but His Divinity could be only 'nuncupative' and His Sonship only 'adoptive.' Thus in His Divine Nature, as God from everlasting, He was very God and the true Son of God, being of the

¹ Dorner, 261.

² *Ibid.*, 260.

³ 'Ita in singularitatem personae confunditis [geminas in Christo naturas] ut inter deum et hominem, inter carnem et verbum, inter creatorem et creaturam, inter suscipientem et susceptum nullam esse differentiam adstruatis.' *Adv. Fel.* iii. 17, *ap.* Dorner, 255.

substance of the Father. But in His Human Nature, as Man, one with mankind in all but sin¹, taking on Him humanity in all its defilement and filthiness, partaking in 'the old man,' needing therefore cleansing and a new birth at baptism, sharing the weakness and frailty and mortality of men, being like them a servant in name and in condition, receiving with them predestination, election, and grace, He was God only *nuncupative*², and Son of God not by nature but by adoption, being born once of His Mother, by a natural but virgin birth as the Son of David, and again, by a process which began with the Baptism and culminated in the Resurrection, as the adoptive Son of God.

He Himself had chosen thus to place Himself on a level with His brethren and attain with them to the name of God by adoption. And this condescension was an integral part of the plan of salvation. For thus, and thus alone, could the Head and the members

¹ *Ep. Elipandi*, 5, 'Quare non dicatur adoptivus qui ita totus est in nostris sicut totus est in suis, praeter delictis?' Cf. *Adv. Fel.* i. 15, &c.

² *Adv. Fel.* iv. 2, 'Secundo autem modo, ait, nuncupative Deus dicitur, sicut superius dictum est de sanctis praedicatoribus, de quibus Salvator Judaeis ait: Si enim illos dixit deos ad quos Dei sermo factus (Joan. x. 35); qui tamen non natura ut Deus, sed per Dei gratiam, ab eo qui verus est Deus, deificati, dii sunt sub illo vocati; in hoc quippe ordine Dei Filius Dominus et Redemptor noster juxta humanitatem, sicut in natura ita et in nomine, quamvis excellentius cunctis electis, verissime tamen cum illis communicat, sicut in cetera omnia [sic] id est in praedestinatione, in electione, in gratia, in susceptione, in assumptione nominis servi, atque applicatione, seu cetera his similia, ut idem qui essentialiter cum Patre et Spiritu sancto in unitate deitatis verus est Deus, ipse in forma humanitatis cum electis suis per adoptionis gratiam deificatus fieret et nuncupativus Deus.' Cf. *ib.* i. 15, 'Non in gloria deitatis, in qua per omnia similis est Patri, dissimilis vero omni creaturae, sed in sola humanitate, in qua per omnia similis factus est nobis, excepta lege peccati, similis utique in natura, cui tamen nullus similis exstat, vel aequalis, in gloria. In hoc autem illum adoptivum credimus apud Patrem, in quo secundum carmen filius est David, non tamen in hoc quod Dominus existit.'

be one in nature, though distinct in glory, and the complete humanity of the Redeemer be preserved. Men could not become members of God or of Christ according to His Deity; human nature could not rise higher than adoption into the family of God, for anything more than that would mean a conversion of the substance and a consequent annulment of the difference between the natures. And if this was true of mankind generally it held good also of the Man Jesus, the adopted members had of necessity an adopted Head. But from the very moment of the Conception the union of the Son of God and the Son of Man in the unity of the one Person became so close that 'the Son of man became the Son of God not by conversion of human nature but by an act of grace (*dignatione*), and the Son of God became likewise the Son of Man not by a transformation of substance but in that the latter was constituted a true son in the Son of God¹.' 'In this way the Adoptionists deemed themselves by one and the same principle to have established both the completeness of the humanity of Christ and its unity with the Son of God at the inmost centre of its being, and yet at the same time a place remained for that process of adoption by which the human nature became assimilated to the divine nature².' As authority for their views they claimed not only the employment of the word *adoptio* in the Mozarabic liturgy, and in the writings of certain Western Fathers, whose orthodoxy

¹ Dorner, *op. cit.*, 257, citing *Adv. Fel.*, v. i. 'Qui illum sibi ex utero matris scilicet ab ipso conceptu in singularitate suae personae ita univit atque conseruit, ut Dei filius esset hominis filius, non mutabilitate naturae, sed dignatione; similiter et hominis filius esset Dei filius non versibilitate substantiae, sed in Dei filio esset verus filius.'

² Dorner, *op. cit.*, 439.

was unimpeachable, but who had used it as equivalent to *assumptio*¹, but all such passages of Scripture as seemed to imply any inferiority in the Son to the Father, or attributed to Him any characteristic human weakness or incapacity, describing Him as a servant, or an advocate, or 'the anointed,' or 'the first-born of men,' as growing in wisdom and stature, as dreading death, or as being ignorant of things to come.

Alcuin's reply to the Adoptionists was contained in three works, the *Liber Albini contra haeresim Felicis*², the *Libri vii adversus Felicem*, and the *Libri iv adversus Elipandum*. In these he sought to grapple closely with the foe, following his every movement, and seizing every point of vantage for attack. With this view he cast aside all thought of symmetry or logical order, and simply adapted himself to the method in which his antagonist developed his argument³. An attempt to describe consecutively the contents of his twelve books would therefore be of little value, but the objections which he urged against the Adoptionist doctrine may be conveniently summarised under four main headings.

¹ Alcuin charged his opponents with confounding 'adoption' and 'assumption,' in his view two mutually exclusive ideas, adoption being possible only for an already existing man, assumption on the other hand being simultaneous with conception.

² This consisted largely of patristic sayings which conflicted with the teachings of the heretics. Alcuin cited Ambrose, Athanasius, Atticus of Constantinople, Augustus, Capreolus, Cassian, Chromatius, Chrysostom, Cyril, Felix (Pope), Gregory of Nazianzen, Jerome, Julius I., Leo the Great, Leporius, Origen, Theodotus of Cyprus, and Victor of Capua, and in his later works also Bede, Isidore, Juvenius, Peter of Ravenna, and Proclus of Constantinople. Cf. Werner, *op. cit.*, 56, 58.

³ This makes it possible to gain some idea of the form as well as the content of Felix's treatise, which, unlike the letters of Elipandus, has long been lost.

In the first place, he asserted, it was an innovation¹, without authority in the Scriptures, in the writings of the Fathers, in the formularies of the Church, in the decrees of Councils, or in the doctrine or practice of the Church of Rome.

Again, it was supported by reasonings which were often false and sometimes inconsistent.

Further, it was heretical, degrading Christ to the level of mankind, and leading logically to Nestorianism.

And lastly, it was the result of a vain and unwarrantable attempt to search into the hidden mysteries of God, which no finite mind could apprehend, and to set limits to the divine omnipotence.

The term 'Adoptive Son,' as applied to the Messiah, was not to be found in the Scriptures, the Fathers, the Creeds, or the decrees of Councils. 'But,' said Felix, 'a new man must have a new name².' From whom then had he learnt that name? Had God revealed it to him in a whirlwind in the seclusion of the Spanish mountains, or in a vision? Why had the revelation been deferred till these latter days of the Faith³? It was much to be feared rather that he had incurred the anathema denounced by St Paul against all who should teach new doctrines⁴. The passages cited from the Scriptures or the Fathers in support of Adoptionism were cited in vain. Some of them were beside the

¹ *Adv. Fel.*, i. 1, 'novo et inaudito...nomine.'

² *Adv. Fel.*, ii. v., 'Recte novus homo novum nomen habere potest.'

³ *Ibid. ib.*, 'Mirum quod hoc novum nomen vobis tantummodo in ultimo Christianitatis tempore innotuit de Christo dici debere.'

⁴ *Ibid. i. 2.*

point, which argued ignorance on the part of the heretics¹. Isaiah's prophecy of Cyrus had no reference to Christ; Zacharias iii. 4 was equally irrelevant; so was Sirach xxxvi. 14, apart from the fact that the book as a whole was apocryphal; there was no authority whatever in regard to St Peter's 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,' for referring the first title to the Human, the second to the Divine Nature; it was useless to cite, as an example of the human limitations of Christ, His saying 'of that day knoweth no man, no, not the Son,' since, as Jerome and Bede showed, that assertion was to be interpreted as metonymic, *nescit qui nescientes facit*,—or, as a proof that He was not God, that other saying, that 'there is none good save One, God,' since undoubtedly He was good by nature, and united in Himself the Son of God and the Son of Man²: or to claim that though the Scriptures might not assert in so many words the Adoptive Sonship it was at least implied by the expressions 'election,' 'grace,' 'assumption,' or the like, since these might equally apply to the true Sonship³.

Other passages again disproved the very thesis they were vouched to prove, which argued signal folly in those who cited them⁴.

Elipandus, for example, quoting the words 'I will be to him a father and he shall be to Me a son,' failed to perceive that the use of *esse* and not *dici* destroyed

¹ *Adv. Fel.* vii. 4. Cf. v. 10, 'Mirandum est quomodo magister velis fieri fidei Catholicae dum verborum per quae fides dicitur rationem ignores.'

² *Ibid.* v. 10.

³ *Ibid.* iii. 8.

⁴ *Ibid.* vii. 4. Cf. *Adv. Elip.* ii. 5.

the very position which he was seeking to establish¹. And Felix rebuked Alcuin for mistaking the nature to which Gregory referred when he said: *Aliud est homines natos gratiam adoptionis accipere, aliud unum singulariter per divinitatis potentiam Deum ex ipso conceptu prodiisse*, and maintained that the divinity of Christ was here in question, whereas since that divinity was eternal this was plainly impossible².

And yet other passages were deliberately falsified, which argued something worse than either ignorance or folly. At one moment Augustine was cited as authority for teaching which in reality he mentioned only to refute⁴, at another the words he used were altered, regardless of grammar, in order to produce a reading which might countenance the error of the Adoptionists⁵; the extracts from Spanish treatises and Spanish liturgies were perhaps equally untrustworthy; sayings attributed by Elipandus to Jerome and Augustine were palpable forgeries⁶; and wherever in a passage quoted⁶ by the heretics certain words, even in their eyes,

¹ *Adv. Elip.*, i. 13, 'O Pater Elipande, ubi perdidisti oculos? Quare posuisti testimonium contra te fortissimum? Forte propter sacerdotii dignitatem cum Caiapha ignorans veritatem protulisti.'

² *Adv. Fel.* vii. 4.

³ *Ibid.* *ib.*

⁴ *Ibid.* vi. 6. In the disputation with the Arian bishop Felicianus then attributed to Augustine.

⁵ *Ibid.* vii. 9, *meritis* changed into *maris*. *Ibid.* vi. 6, *nostro* into *alieno*.

⁶ Cf. *Adv. Elip.* ii. 14, where Alcuin suggests that the fabrication might be due not to the Archbishop himself but to the younger heretics to whom he lent a too confiding ear. 'Doctorum...catholicas sententias vel perverso sensu vel perfida vos immutare temeritate agnovimus.' *Adv. Elip.* ii. 8, 'Forte occupatio pastoralis curae et adfectio impiae gentis te diligentius quid scriberes considerare impedivit, sed junioribus tuis male credulus quod illi scripserunt vel tuæ suaserunt senectuti verum putasti.' *Id. ibid.* 14.

refuted their teaching, such words were deliberately omitted¹.

On the other hand, when Felix demanded by what authority his doctrine was challenged² it was easy to reply.

The Father Himself at the Baptism³ and the Transfiguration⁴, the Angel of the Annunciation⁵, the Angels who appeared to the shepherds at the Nativity⁶, the Apostles⁷ and Evangelists⁸, the Prophets⁹, the Fathers¹⁰, the Roman Church, both through the writings of her Popes and in her liturgies¹¹, had with one accord borne witness to the true divinity of Christ from the very moment of His conception. And what had Felix and his followers to set against the testimony of this cloud of witnesses? Their own private opinions, certain

¹ *Adv. Fel.* vi. 6, 'Quaedam calliditatis tuae nequitia subtrahis, quae tuam haeresim damnare videntur.'

² *Adv. Fel.* iv. 12, 'Dicis enim, qua auctoritate idem homo dominicus ex utero matris verus Deus conceptus, et verus Deus natus praedicatur, cum sit natura verus homo et per omnia subditus Deo?' Cf. *Ibid.* vii. 14, 'Si quis nos a nostro professione declinare vult, proferat aequae idoneos testes qui affirmant quod ex utero matris verus Deus sit conceptus et verus sit Filius Dei.'

³ *Ibid.* i. 20, etc.

⁴ *Ibid.* i. 18, etc. So Christ Himself declared that 'God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son,' which disposed of Felix's argument that the Gospels spoke only of the Son of Man, not of the Son of God, as being delivered up for men.

⁵ *Ibid.* i. 17, etc.

⁶ *Ibid.* *ib.*

⁷ *E.g.*, St Thomas: 'My Lord and my God.' *Ibid.* i. 19. St Paul's 'not I but Christ that speaketh in me' proved that Christ was God, for none but God could speak in a man (*Ibid.* iv. 7).

⁸ *Ibid.* i. 16. The Evangelists ascribed to Christ the power of reading thoughts, which only God possessed.

⁹ *Ibid.* ii. 3.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* iv. 12.

¹¹ *Ibid.* vii. 13. Even in the Spanish Mass, as in all others, these words were used: 'per Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum qui tecum vivit et regnat Deus,' etc. *Ibid.* iv. 5.

expressions attributed on somewhat doubtful authority to Spanish writers¹, a few phrases, possibly corrupt², in the Mozarabic liturgy! What folly to reject for these the Catholic teaching of the Universal Church³! It could not even be maintained that the Spanish theologians were unanimous; for Isidore and Juvenius were plainly on the same side as Alcuin himself⁴; even had it been otherwise their authority would have been far outweighed by the consistent teaching of Rome⁵. Felix had pronounced his own condemnation when he asserted that membership of the Catholic Church dispersed throughout the world was essential to salvation, and added that the Church, however great her straits, could never be confined to one race or province or kingdom,—for the Adoptionists were to be found in Spain alone⁶.

But—even if the question of authority were set

¹ *Adv. Fel.* ii. 3, 'Paucis Hispaniae non dico doctoribus sed veritatis desertoribus.' *Ibid.* vii. 13, 'Praesules... Hispaniarum, quos tu orthodoxos dicis, in his quae posuisti orationibus indubitanter haeretici esse dinoscuntur.' Cf. *Ep. ad Elipandum*: 'Dicit... Felix Hispaniae Doctores Christum adoptivum solitos esse nominare, sed illos doctores nos non legimus, neque ad nos illorum scripta pervenerunt; et si dixerint, forte simplex ignorantia eos defendit a mucrone anathematis.'

² *Adv. Elip.* ii. 8, 'Magis aestimandum est juniores quoslibet... dicta... corrumpere doctorum.' Cf. *Adv. Fel.* vii. 13, 'Nisi forte eorum dicta... depravaris.'

³ *Adv. Fel.* i. 2, 'Stultitia magna est... SS. Patrum vel totius Ecclesiae catholicos spernere sensus.' Cf. *Ep. ad Elip.*: 'Major quoque auctoritas doctorum totius mundi debet esse quam paucorum in Hispania.' Cf. *Adv. Fel.* iv. 5: 'Intellige, o indocta temeritas, quid post tantorum patrum testimonium relinqui potest nuncupationis in Christo vel adoptionis.'

⁴ *Ibid.* ii. 6 and 7. *Ep. ad Elip.* 11. *Adv. Elip.* ii. 8.

⁵ *Adv. Fel.* vii. 13, 'Nos enim Romana plus auctoritate quam Hispana veritate adsertionis et fidei nostrae fulciri desideramus... unusquisque in hoc se refutandum sciati, in quo ab universali dissentit Ecclesia.'

⁶ *Ibid.* i. 4.

aside—the unsoundness of many of the arguments employed by the Adoptionists would suffice to discredit their contention. Felix argued that since Christ was described both as the Son of God and as the Son of David, and a son can have but one true father¹, the solution of the problem must lie in a distinction between adoptive and natural sonship. But since Christ's was a Virgin Birth, if God was not His natural Father He had none; on the other hand in one sense of the word all the ancestors of His Mother were His 'fathers².'

Again, if, as Felix maintained, Christ as Man must be only the adoptive Son of the Father, because not born of His substance according to the flesh, then as God He must be only the adoptive Son of the Virgin, because not born of her flesh. But—since Felix, as a Christian, was precluded from asserting that she was *Dei genetrix*, not *proprie*, but merely *adoptive*—he ought in like manner to refuse to characterise the Sonship of the Father as adoptive³.

Moreover if the *homo* assumed by the Son of God was only adoptive, the Son who made the assumption must be adoptive also, for the unity of the Person is undeniable, and one person cannot be both *proprius* and *adoptivus*⁴.

Felix declared it to be incredible that God being a Spirit, should beget flesh *de semetipso*. But in every human birth a child comes into existence who is

¹ If one son cannot have two fathers one father cannot have one son partly natural and partly adoptive. *Adv. Fel.*, iii. 1, 2, cf. i. 12.

² *Ibid. ib.*

³ *Ibid. i. 13.*

⁴ *Ibid. ii. 12.*

the true son of his parents, though only his body, and not his soul, is derived from them¹. And thus this analogy of the body and soul—the one derived from the parents, the other *ex nihilo creata*—by which Felix sought to prove that the same person might be both *verus* and *adoptivus filius*, and thus to escape predicated a double personality, would, if rightly apprehended, solve his whole difficulty, which seemed to arise from his refusing to consider *filium aliter posse esse proprium nisi ex natura parentum totus nascatur*².

And, to take another instance, to argue that, because St Peter and St Paul spoke of being *in* and *with* Christ, therefore Christ was not God proved too much, for Christ Himself said ‘I am in the Father, and the Father in Me’; and on the same principle it would follow accordingly that the Father also was not God. So if Christ was an adoptive Son because He was ‘the Head of every man,’ and men were adoptive sons of God, then the Father as *Caput Christi* must also be adoptive. But St Paul was to be understood spiritually.

Sometimes the arguments of the Adoptionists were even mutually inconsistent. Felix himself, for example, asserted in one part of his treatise the Catholic doctrine of the identity of the Son of God and the Son of Man, and would thereby have proved himself a Catholic had not his contrary assertions already proved him a heretic³.

¹ *Adv. Fel.* iii. 7.

² *Ibid.* v. 3.

³ *Ibid.* v. 1, 2, ‘Nescio utrum subdole simulatione prioribus tuis sermonibus melius crederetur, quibus multimoda argumentatione veritatem impugnare probaris, aut cum diabolo timore perterritus nolens Christum Dei filium esse confiteris...’ ‘Qui illum,’ inquis, ‘sibi ex utero matris, sc. ab ipso conceptu, in singularitate suae personae ita univit et conseruit ut Dei filius esset hominis filius non mutabili-

No wonder he differed from others if he differed thus from himself!

As for the charge of Eutychianism or Docetism brought against him by his opponents, Alcuin repelled it with indignation. He maintained steadfastly the distinction between 'the two natures,' condemning as 'utterly reprehensible' the assertion, attributed by Felix to Beatus and Itherius, that they were mingled together like water and wine¹; they were not, as Eutychus taught, confused, but only, as the Catholic Church maintained, ineffably conjoined². But, he retorted, the Adoptionists themselves were in imminent danger of falling into the heresy of the Nestorians. If the Virgin-born Christ was only *nuncupative* God, the Virgin-Mother could be only *nuncupative* θεοτόκος, a Nestorian error³. When Felix asked: 'What but a

tate naturae sed dignatione, similiter et hominis filius esset Dei filius, non versibilitate substantiae, sed in Dei filio esset verus filius... Paulo ante dixisti Christum duos habere patres, David sc. naturalem et Deum patrem ex adoptione. Hic vero oblitus horum verborum ais 'secundo vero ex matre sine patre.' Cf. *Ibid.* i. 15, 'Videte ne vobis metipsis contraria dicatis; quem adseritis in natura per omnia nobis similem, hunc eundem dicitis dissimilem in gloria.'

¹ *Adv. Fel.* i. 8, 'In eo, si verum est, valde eos esse reprehensibiles judicamus.' Cf. *Adv. Elip.* i. 9, 'Quod vero me adseris humanitatem veram in Christo negare omnino falsum est; nec in omni litterarum mearum serie me hoc dicere vel credidisse probare poteris.'

² *Adv. Fel.* iii. 17, 'Quod dicis geminas nos naturas in singularitatem unius personae confundere, ex parte quidem verum dicis, ex parte vero solito tuo more falso calumniaris. Nos namque duas naturas in una Christi persona, non, ut tu dicis, cum Eutychē, confusas, sed cum Ecclesia catholica sic ineffabiliter conjunctas credimus...ut, manente utriusque naturae proprietate, et, ut ita dicam, salva integritate ambarum, et divina humanis, et humana divinis communicent.' Cf. *Adv. Elip.* i. 20, 'Naturae nostrae assumpsit veritatem, non adoptionis nostrae personam: non mutans naturam humanitatis nostrae in naturam divinitatis suae, sed mutavit personam adoptionis nostrae in personam proprietatis suae; sua non minuens sed nostra augens. Permansit quod erat, dum assumpsit quod non erat.'

³ *Adv. Fel.* vii. 2.

slave could be born of a handmaiden?' he was but repeating, though in other words, the old Pelagian fallacy that Christ was a *solitarius homo*, a conception which had led Nestorius to insist on the necessity of a double personality¹. Indeed, the difference between Adoptionism and Nestorianism was little more than verbal². Nestorius had distinguished two persons in Christ; in words Felix repudiated his teaching, but in effect himself distinguished two Sons, one true, the other adoptive, and two Gods, one real, the other nuncupative, and attributed to each all the essentials of a person³. Felix, again, seemed to follow Pelagius and Nestorius in ascribing to the merits of Christ that He was what He was⁴, the Catholic doctrine being that from the very beginning, without preceding merit, He was conceived and born as God⁵. And by his assertion that Christ *gestavit humanitatem* he had incurred the

¹ *Adv. Fel.* iii. 3, 'Hoc et antecessor tuus Pelagius, licet aliis verbis tamen eodem sensu, olim dicebat, adserens Christum solitarium esse hominem; ex quo forte et Nestorius suam condidit heresim, qua duas personas in Christo voluit intelligi.'

² *Ibid.* i. 11, 'Licet voce dissimilis, tamen confessioni par.'

³ *Ibid.* i. 1, 'Dividens Christum in duos filios, unum vocans proprium, alterum adoptivum, et in duos Deos, unum verum Deum, alterum nuncupativum Deum.' *Ibid.* iv. 5, 'Nam, si duas personas in uno Christo propter apertam blasphemiam timeas fateri, tamen omnia quae duabus personis inesse necesse est in tua confessione confirmare non metuas...Alia quippe est persona veri Dei, alia nuncupativi, et alia est persona veri Filii Dei, altera adoptivi filii.' So vii. 11. Cf. *Adv. Elip.* iv. 5, 'Nihil prorsus restat [sic] vestrae perfidiae secta ab infidelitate Nestorii nisi quod ille in matre Virgine erravit, vos in filio Christo. Ille adseruit beatam Virginem Dei genetricem non esse, vos vero adfirmatis nec deum verum, nec dei vere filium esse, qui natus est ex virginali utero.'

⁴ *Adv. Fel.* vii. 9, 'Tu dicis cum antecessoribus tuis Pelagio et Nestorio Christum meruisse ut esset quod est.'

⁵ *Ibid. ib.*, 'Catholici doctores nullis praecedentibus meritis in ipso humanitatis Christi exordio eundem Deum esse conceptum et natum testantur.'

anathema pronounced by the Fathers against all who taught that he was *Deifer potius quam Deus*¹. Moreover his teaching was a degradation of Christ, Who was conceived apparently as predestined like ordinary men to adoption², as rising from dead things at His Baptism³, as crucifying the old man on the cross⁴.

Felix indeed maintained the contrary view. What more excellent, what more honourable, what more holy gift, he asked, could God give to human nature than adoption, by which after the transgressions of men it attained to reconciliation with God⁵? And, for man, this was indeed true; to him adoption was in the highest degree honourable. But to Christ it was degrading, for His Sonship was true and as such more honourable than any adoptive sonship could be.

And to ascribe to Him, as Felix did, a servile condition was nothing short of blasphemy⁶. He came indeed in the form of a servant, but as Augustine said, it was only a form, and that form clothed the Lord. Felix failed to perceive that the prophets who spoke of Him as a servant referred not literally to any obligatory

¹ *Adv. Fel.* iii. 2. Cf. *Ibid.* 3. Cyril said 'Caveamus ergo de Christo dicere "propter adsummentem vereor adsumptum, et propter invisibilem adoro visibilem."' But Felix had gone further, and in effect divided Christ. 'Horrendum vero super hoc etiam illud adjicitis, qui susceptus est, cum eo qui suscepit, connuncupatur Deus.'

² *Ibid.* ii. 13.

³ *Ibid.* *ib.* 17.

⁴ *Ibid.* *ib.* 13. Felix regarded the Incarnation (as involving descent, in spite of personal sinlessness, from a line of sinful ancestors) as necessitating a cleansing by Baptism; and explained the two genealogies given by St Matthew and St Luke respectively as tracing the descent of Christ in the one case by nature, in the other by adoption. *Ibid.* *ib.* 17.

⁵ *Ibid.* *ib.* 11.

⁶ *Ibid.* iv. 9 and vi. 1, 2.

servile position but in a figure to His voluntary obedience in the fulfilment of His Father's will¹. Freedom must have belonged even to the first Adam, or he could not have been made in the image of God, or have possessed free will, or have lost anything through the Fall; how much rather then to the Second! To argue from the words of the Virgin's prayer that she must have been literally a 'handmaid,' and her Son therefore a slave, was to place them on a lower plane than Sarah and Isaac. But the Incarnation was no degradation of the Divinity, but an elevation of humanity. It might even be conjectured that the whole error of Adoptionism had arisen from this mistaken conception of the position of Christ; and the idea that a slave could attain not indeed to real sonship or true Godhead, but to adoptive Sonship and nuncupative Godhead².

Lastly, the whole attitude of the Adoptionists was at fault. Not only were they setting authority at naught, and weaving heresies by false deductions from texts which were often enough themselves corrupt, but they were further vainly endeavouring to search out by means of the finite human intellect mysteries which faith alone could enable man to apprehend³. How could man's reason investigate the method of the Incarnation, the manner in which He who made all

¹ Felix asked 'in qua forma erit in aeternum Patri subditus, si inter divinitatem ejus et humanitatem nulla differentia nullaue inaequalitas fore credatur?' But the question would be unnecessary if he had truly understood the meaning of St Paul as Hilary had explained it. *Adv. Fel.* vi. 5.

² *Ibid.* iv. 10.

³ *Ibid.* i. 8, 'Quae omnia magis fide venerari quam ratione discutere debemus, quia ubi ratio defecit, ibi fides est necessaria.'

things acquired Himself a created being¹? He Who was Himself the Law of Nature could be bound by no other law: man's duty was not to argue that this or that method was impossible, but to believe that to the Almighty God all things alike were easy². Faith must come first, comprehension might follow³. And Felix, who would be at a loss himself to explain the everyday marvels of nature, might well allow that God could work that which man's frailty would fail to apprehend, and cease his presumptuous endeavour to restrain the Divine omnipotence within the narrow bounds set by the human understanding⁴.

The last objection, like the first, is peculiarly characteristic of Alcuin. A reverent awe in the presence of the great mysteries of the Faith, a reluctance even to

¹ *Adv. Fel.* vi. 9, 10, 'Quid enim ratione humanae consuetudinis investigandum est quod divinae potestatis miraculo factum esse probatur?...Humana ratio investigare non poterit quomodo qui fecit omnia factus est inter omnia.'

² *Ibid.* iii. 2, 'Nulla tenus ergo te, O Felix, humana ratione investigare rationem verbi Dei, qua...caro factum est, posse putes: non enim humana possibilitate omnipotentiam divinitatis metire debes. Ipse qui lex est naturarum nulla lege alterius naturae subjacet: nec infimis humanae conjecturae ratiunculis qui incomprehensibilis est comprehendi poterit. Quapropter unigeniti Dei nativitatem vel divinam vel etiam humanam desine ad nostram mortalitatis impossibilitatem redigere: neque ei qui extra conceptum humanae originis natus est humanis difinitiuiculis praejudicare tentes, quomodo nasci posset, vel quomodo esset proprius filius Dei dum natus esset. Si Deo omnia possibilia cognoscas, et hoc ei possibile esse scito, ut proprium filium e virgine creatum habere valuisset.' Cf. *ibid.* i. 8.

³ *Adv. Elip.* iv. 11, 'Ordinata charitas est primum credere de Deo quae in divinis leguntur libris et post fidem intelligentiae devotionem adhibere. Sed vos...ordine praepostero accedere vultis ad Deum, preponentes humanae conjecturae fribulosas ratiunculas Catholicae fidei soliditati, volentes prius intelligere et secundo loco credere...dum prius est credere et postea intelligere.'

⁴ *Adv. Fel.* iii. 2. Cf. *ibid.* ib. 3, 'Concede...Deum aliquid posse quod humana non valeat infirmitas comprehendere, nec nostra ratiocinatione legem ponamus majestati aeternae quid possit, dum omnia potest qui omnipotens est.'

attempt to search into the secrets of the Most High, not less than a profound respect for authority, was inherent in his temperament, and accorded well with his deep-seated distrust both of himself and of his generation¹. And here he found himself utterly out of sympathy with the keen relentless logic of Felix, who shrank from no conclusion to which he felt himself impelled by his determination to vindicate the entire humanity of Christ.

Alcuin succeeded in showing that the authorities cited by the Adoptionists were falsified, and that the logical consequences of their teaching were heretical, but he achieved little in the way of constructive work. His appeal to the omnipotence of God was no solution of the difficulty which they had endeavoured to evade. And though the doctrine that the Human Nature of Christ was 'impersonal' has been accepted as true by the Church at large², the 'kind of transubstantiation

¹ 'Here we have the older Greek standpoint, the deep and reverent sense of an ineffable mystery in the Incarnation...Felix represents the opposite type of mind, the keen logical sense which insists on distinctions, the practical instinct which discerns the ethical importance of Christ's human life and example. Adoptionism is in fact a revival in a new form of the old opposition between Antioch and Alexandria.' Ottley, *Doctrine of the Incarnation*, ii. 159.

² Cf. Mason, *The Faith of the Gospel*, p. 135. 'If a solid union between God and man is to be brought about, if the Son of God is Himself going to take human nature as His own, if in His own Person He is to be 'the Second Man' from Heaven (1 Cor. xv. 47) and begin a new departure for the human race, then it is imperatively necessary that we should conceive of the humanity which He assumed as "impersonal," that is, as having no centre of consciousness or being apart from Him. It was He who became man, who was born, and who died, not another person, however closely connected with Him. This is all that we mean by the 'impersonality' of Christ's human nature. We do not mean by it that His human nature was an unreality, a phantom, an automaton, made to go through the semblance of a human life, and worked by a Divine Person outside of it...The phrase simply betokens the unity of our Lord's Person, not a

theory of Christ's person,' laid down both in Alcuin's own writings and in the decision of the Council of Frankfort, according to which an original human personality of Christ was destroyed—consumed by the Divine, and replaced by it¹—has been abandoned².

defect in the nature which He assumed.' Cf. Ottley, *op. cit.*, ii. 268; Liddon, *Bampton Lectures*, 23. The possible dangers of the phrase are emphasised by Moberly, *Atonement and Personality*, 93. 'It has been often felt as a difficulty to conceive quite adequately of the reality of His being, as human, without going in thought too far, and conceiving of Him at once as two distinct Persons, a human person as well as a Divine. And so Christian thought has learned to shrink from speaking, or thinking, of Him as a "human personality," and has sometimes made even a sort of principle of speaking of the impersonal character of the humanity of Christ. But if there is error at hand in the one direction, there is certainly also error in the other. If there is a sense in which the assertion of a human personality runs easily with Nestorianism, at least those who first asserted a human personality meant something which the simple denial of the phrase may unduly disparage. To deny the human personality, however in some contexts necessary, is not without its own risks. There is, and can be, no such thing as impersonality.... Human nature can only be the nature of a person: not exactly, of necessity, of a human person; but of a person who being in himself at least human, perhaps more than human, is, so far as his assumption of humanity goes, adequately self-expressed in terms, and through conditions, of humanity. Of necessity, He is a Person: and He, the Person, is human. The root and origin of His Personality may not be human. But, in so far as He is a Person now humanly incarnate, the word human has become a true attribute, truly predicable of His Personality. Of necessity, He is a Person, and a Person who expresses His very self, through the human conditions and capacities, as man. The human acts, and human character, are the acts and the character, the expression and the revelation, of Himself.'

¹ 'In adsumptione carnis a Deo persona perit hominis, non natura.' *Adv. Fel.* ii. 12. The Council of Frankfort cited the dictum of Paschasius (*Lib. ii. de Spiritu Sancto contra Macedonium*, ii. 4): 'in Christo gemina substantia sed non gemina persona est, quia persona personam consumere potest; substantia vero substantiam non potest; siquidem persona res juris est, substantia res naturae.'

² Dorner, *op. cit.*, 253, holds that 'from this controversy dated a retrogressive movement in Christology, which substantially paralysed Dyophysitism and Dyotheletism ever more and more. The view... of the Incarnation as the miracle by which the divine was substituted for the human substance, leaving to the latter merely its accidents, began... to show itself, at all events in connection with the Eucharist.' Cf. *ibid.* 263: 'the doctrine of the duality of substances in Christ began

The treatise *De Fide Sanctae Trinitatis*, the last of Alcuin's dogmatic writings, and perhaps in his eyes the most important of them all, was not controversial in tone.

In the dedication to Charles he avowed as one of his objects in writing it the vindication of Augustine's dictum that dialectic was essential to the proper study of theology¹, and the basis of the entire work is Augustinian².

Like that great Doctor himself, Alcuin starts from the position that the inborn longing of man which makes him seek for truth, eternity, and absolute blessedness was not extinguished by the Fall. That catastrophe did indeed lead to vain and disastrous attempts to find satisfaction in temporal things. But the Holy Scriptures point man still to Heaven and the things eternal, and teach that these are attainable only through faith, and love to God and man. Without

to be modified and the human nature to be allotted as "*proprium*" and predicate to the divine.' So *ibid.* 267. 'Though the name of substance was still given to the humanity, a power was set over it... which, by the destruction of its inmost centre, the personality, and the substitution of itself, essentially degraded it to a mere husk or shell.' But cf. *per contra* the passages cited *supra*, p. 157, n. 2. Dörner regards Alcuin's own treatment of the subject as not wholly consistent: *op. cit.*, 267.

¹ Elsewhere Alcuin occasionally defended the employment of dialectic in theological discussions. Cf. *Ep.* 307 [240] (referring to questions propounded by a certain Greek at Charles' court): 'Beatum Paulum legimus cum Stoicis disputare, ut eorum eos disciplinis ab errore in vitam veritatis transduceret... Cur non, tam praeclaris eruditus exemplis, dialecticos illi quaestionario proponimus syllogismos? ut, suorum sauciatus armis, in catholici exercitus libens castra recurrat.'

² Hauck (ii. 138, n. 8) observes that Alcuin was not a whole-hearted Augustinian; that predestination was not directly taught by him, though something approaching to the doctrine may be discovered here and there in his writings, as in *Ep.* 232 [173], and *Carm.* ix. vv. 7 and 85 ff.

faith there can be no pleasing God, and it is therefore essential that the true faith should be rightly apprehended, most of all by those whose office it is to instruct their brethren,—for how can they teach if they have not first learnt themselves?

As to the nature of the Trinity, then, the Old and New Testaments alike bear witness that God is in essence and substance One,—in Persons Three. Thus in the text 'Let us make man in our image' this truth is indicated by the plural pronoun and the singular noun¹.

The names of the three Persons express not differences of substance, but the internal relations of the Trinity; the Third Person being an ineffable *communio* of the First and Second,—and all Three alike being mutually inseparable, no one being mentioned without predicating another.

That which every person is *ad se*, not *relate ad aliquid*, e.g. God, He is not apart from the other Persons: the eternity and omnipotence and greatness and goodness of God is not triple but single.

All that is predicated of God does not fall under the category of substance: since He is eternal and immutable there can indeed be nothing really 'accidental'; but human predications of God may be placed in all the categories, either strictly (*sensu proprio*)—as substance, quantity, quality, or action: or metaphorically—as position, place, time, possession, or passion. Such predications fall into three classes, being made either *proprie*, e.g. the absolute goodness and greatness of

¹ So in Isaiah vi. 3 the thrice-repeated 'Holy' signifies the Trinity, the single 'Lord of Sabaoth,' the Unity.

God: or *relative*, as the Fatherhood of the Father or the Sonship of the Son: or *translative*, as time and place and position and passion—the Scriptures employing the words of men to describe in a figure the things of God¹.

All is either eternal or in time, created or uncreated. God is the Cause and Creator of all that there is beside Himself, but it is not of His substance, but began to exist in time by the will of His omnipotence. For Him there is no separation between willing and doing, they are one and the same thing. He is omnipresent, containing, rather than contained in, all things; including all, but neither included in nor excluded from any. He is invisible and incomprehensible to men and angels alike, neither being able to apprehend the Divinity except according to the measure of the gift of God; even in the Resurrection life man will not be able to see Him wholly. The Father works through the Son, through Whom all things were made,—but Their work is one. Before the coming of Christ God appeared only through the Angels, who assumed a human form.

Creation is both physical and spiritual, visible and invisible; it is—either made but not born, as the heavens and the earth, or made and born, being either insensitive, as trees, or sensitive, as animals. Man is further ‘born again.’ He alone is at once rational and mortal, as the angels alone, whether good or bad, are

¹ Here Alcuin guards against a possible confusion between *proprie* as used in this sense and the term *proprium*, which signifies the distinguishing characteristic of each Person of the Trinity; in the Father *non esse ab alio*, in the Son *genitum esse ex solo Patre*, in the Spirit *procedere ex Patre et Filio*. The Father is *ingenitus*, the Son *unigenitus*, the Spirit neither.

rational and immortal. God is omnipresent, but different kinds of presence may be distinguished; the dwellers in Heaven are rather in Him than He in them; and while His presence in all creation may be called natural, His presence in holy men is supernatural.

Then, passing on to the consideration of the Incarnation, Alcuin asserts that the Son so took flesh upon Him that God and Man in Him were one. As God He gave the Spirit of God, as Man He received it, but, unlike other men, not in measure, but in its entirety. In the Incarnate Son two Natures but not two Persons are to be distinguished, while in the Trinity the Nature is one, but the Persons three. The Conception was an operation of grace by which the Humanity of Christ, without preceding merit, was taken into the Trinity, and typified the justification of men by grace without merit. As Man not less than as God, Christ was the true Son of God, not merely, as Spanish heretics have taught, an adoptive Son. God the Son assumed human nature, not a human person, having from eternity a divine Person; taking in time human substance; having the divine Nature of the Father, the human substance of the Virgin Mother; bearing as Man the penalty of sin even to death, sharing as God in the changeless righteousness of the Divinity; being the one Mediator, through whom alone man could have peace with God, at once the Priest and the Sacrifice; spoken of now as equal, now as inferior, to the Father, according to the Nature, divine or human, which is at the moment in contemplation¹.

¹ The reception of the Spirit both at the Conception and in the Baptism is explained as teaching the double duty of man to God and to his neighbour, and (in the second instance) revealing to man the nature of the Trinity.

The Spirit—coeternal and consubstantial with the Father and the Son; proceeding from both; speaking through the Prophets and Apostles; being Himself the Love, as the Son is the Wisdom, of God; comforting men, as the Paraclete, with the Sacraments, through which they receive the love of God (a gift denied to those without the Catholic Church) and the presence of the Trinity; imparting to them the varying ‘gifts of the Spirit’—is never *minor Deo Patre*, and must not be regarded as having been incarnate in either the dove or the tongues of fire, having never really assumed a created form.

The thought of the twofold nature of Christ leads to the consideration of the two parts of man, body and spirit, and the death and resurrection of each.

The reign of Antichrist who will persecute the prophets and put them to death, and the conversion of the Jews, must precede the end of the world.

The nature of the Resurrection body is unknown; but all men alike will be tried by fire, its effect being for the holy exhilaration, for the repentant purification, for the wicked destruction. The pains of Hell, like the pleasures of Heaven, will not be equal to all alike, for some will be beaten with few stripes. As for the perfect state, its distinguishing characteristic will be an incapacity either to sin or to die, as contrasted with the capacity not to sin or die which existed in the Garden of Eden, and the incapacity not to sin or die which followed the Fall.

Such are the chief writings on which the reputation of Alcuin as a theologian is based. Originality, it is obvious, is never to be expected from him. The

main characteristic of his teaching in all departments alike is extreme conservatism. He was perhaps not less unfitted than unwilling to break new ground. It was enough that he should record and defend the accepted doctrines of his predecessors. Respect for authority was a predominant feature in his moral and intellectual composition, and its influence was perhaps most of all to be seen in his theological work. The teaching of the Catholic Church, and especially of the Head of the Church, the successor of St Peter, was the standard by which he judged of doctrine¹. If it accorded with the Scripture and the writings of the Fathers a dogma was sound, if not to uphold it was audacious blasphemy. And the manner as well as the matter of the great Church writers commanded his respect: the methods employed by his predecessors, especially by Augustine, Gregory, Jerome, and Bede, were the model of his own.

It is perhaps this unquestioning acceptance of traditional teaching which led to that divorce of formal theology from vitalising faith with which medieval theologians have been reproached. The dogmas of orthodoxy were embraced without hesitation, but little or no attempt was made to bring them into connection with the religious motive which must inspire the spiritual life. Not that such a motive was lacking, but simply that it was a thing apart, neither antagonistic to, nor yet the product of, the authoritative formulæ

¹ 'Ne schismaticus inveniatur et non catholicus, sequatur probatissimam sanctae Romanae ecclesiae auctoritatem, ut unde catholicae fidei initia accepimus inde exemplaria salutis nostrae semper habeamus, ne membra a capite separentur suo, ne claviger regni coelestis abiciat quos a suis deviasse intellegit doctrinis.' *Ep.* 137 [93].

which constituted the accepted creed¹. Thus it has been pointed out that for Alcuin personally the fact that seemed of paramount importance was the infinite goodness of God, which demands the boundless trust of man, who by it is enabled to pass through contrition and penitence to that forgiveness of sins which constitutes salvation; Christ Himself being the Saviour not only historically, by His death on the Cross, but presently in His dealings with every individual soul. Sin and forgiveness, temptation and deliverance, imperfection and perfection, the evil of the world overcome by the free gifts of God, for which the Mass is offered and the intercession of the Saints implored—these were the great realities for Alcuin, the conceptions by which his whole life was moulded².

The other articles of his creed he did indeed defend with zeal and vigour, maintaining the necessity to salvation of the truth; but in the struggle against Adoptionism it was Felix rather than Alcuin who was fighting for the hope that was in him, and defending convictions which lay at the basis of his own spiritual life. For him it was essential to find in his creed the satisfaction of his own ethical yearnings, for Alcuin the paramount necessity was to defend the Faith in that form in which it had descended through the tradition of the Saints. Thus much may be granted,

¹ 'Deshalb führte keine Brücke von dem Dogma zur Religiosität: was man als die seligmachende Wahrheit betrachtete, verehrte, hütete, das gab keine religiösen und sittlichen Motive für das Leben ab. Die Theologie wurde zum dialektischen Spiel mit Formeln, welche die Einsicht in das Wesen der Gottheit erschliessen sollten; der Glaube aber ging, beherrscht, wohl auch irre geleitet von den religiösen Bedürfnissen, seine eigenen Wege.' Hauck, ii. 140

² Cf. *ibid.* 142.

and with it the inevitable formality of his theology, its lack of freshness and originality. Yet through all the pages of his theological writings, controversial or didactic, the absolute sincerity of his simple faith is unmistakeable. Formality did not for him mean formalism; the ideas, the phrases, which he employed and defended, were indeed sufficiently consecrated in his eyes simply by their studied orthodoxy, but that was not all; behind lay the consciousness, always present if often unexpressed, that they represented those realities on which, as he believed, all that was worth living for depended.

CHAPTER IX.

ALCUIN'S WORK: (ii) EDUCATIONAL.

IN the seventh and the early years of the eighth century intellectual life was nearly extinct in the Frankish realm. 'Under the Merovingian dynasty learning almost ceased to exist. It had found refuge in the Church and in the monastery, and the condition of these, at the accession of Charles Martel, was one of demoralisation¹.'

The decline had been gradual. The dying struggles of classical paganism had aroused in the Church an implacable and increasing hostility to the library of classical philosophy and mythology. Under the influence of that hostility the denunciations of heathen literature in the pages of a Tertullian or a Jerome awakened a responsive echo in the conscience of the age, and the injunction of Origen² and Augustine³ to 'spoil the Egyptians,' extracting the gold and rejecting

¹ Mullinger, *op. cit.*, 37.

² *Epistola ad Gregorium*, 2. (Migne, *Patrol. Graeco-Lat.* xi. 88.) He interpreted in a somewhat similar manner Levit. xi. 3 (*ibid.* xii. 490).

³ *De Doctrina Christiana*, ii. 60 (Migne, *Patrol. Lat.* iii. 64). Cf. Norden, *Die Antike Kunstprosa*, 575-580.

the dross of the classical learning, was interpreted in ever narrower fashion. Cassian did indeed attempt, and fail, to perpetuate a mutilated culture by incorporating it with ecclesiasticism. Learning was to be cultivated for the benefit of the Church, the Church was to absorb learning; what she could utilise directly or indirectly was to be preserved, what she could not could have no claim to preservation. But incorporation, thus interpreted, meant in reality complete subordination. When nothing is taught that cannot be turned to practical account, and learning, ceasing to be an end in itself, is employed only as a means to an end, the conclusion is foregone. Cassian, unconscious of the extent of his own debt to a classical training, underestimated its educational value, and failed to realise what its withdrawal from the education of the future would mean. He aimed at replacing secular by religious learning, the study of the classics by the study of theology. He succeeded only in substituting for a liberal education a meagre institution in ecclesiastical technicalities. Sidonius Apollinaris was almost the last representative of the traditional culture, and the Frankish invasions did but accelerate its destruction. The learning that could be pressed into the immediate service of the Church—and this alone was in practice cultivated—was elementary in kind and insignificant in amount. The demand naturally regulated the supply, and under the circumstances regulation meant of necessity severe restriction. The municipal gave place to the monastic school, 'the grammarian was expelled by the scholastic, and the scholastic had little interest, or little power, to imbue

his disciples with more knowledge than was required for a perfunctory execution of the offices of the Church¹. The 'three R's' were indeed essential—reading, that the sacred offices might be duly read; writing, that there might be service books to read; arithmetic, that the calendar of fasts and festivals might be calculated and observed; while some knowledge of music was necessary for the proper chanting of the Psalms. But few of those who taught were competent, and fewer still perhaps desired, to teach more than these rudiments of learning. In all schools alike, episcopal, monastic, or parochial, the course of instruction, at once technical and elementary, was directed solely to the training of ecclesiastics in the details of liturgical routine. In 529 the Council of Vaison ordered parish priests to receive 'readers' into their houses, but the readers, though bound by no vow², were intended to 'read' for the benefit of the Church.

The exceptions which no doubt existed were few and far between. Literature dwindled to a name. Philosophers there were none. Students of the Scriptures, if they attempted anything more than a rude paraphrase of the text, wasted their energies in the wildest and most fantastic interpretations, and scholarly exegesis was unknown.

The pedants of the sixth century 'School of Toulouse'—Virgil, Cicero, Terence, Aeneas, and their fellows—did nothing to redeem the character of the age. The poverty of their classical attainments, in

¹ Poole, *op. cit.*, 7.

² Denk, *op. cit.*, 192. They might marry and return to secular life if they chose.

spite of their extravagant mutual admiration¹, contrasted strangely with the names they bore. Their powers were exhausted in the elaboration of the 'Twelve Latinities²,' or in arguments, lasting at times for fourteen or fifteen days together, and occasionally almost bringing them to blows, on questions of such paramount importance as whether '*ego*' had a vocative case, or every verb a frequentative force! For letters in the true sense they did nothing. 'They worked their hardest to involve all Europe in a fog of learned perplexity³,' and left abiding traces of their corrupting influence in the absurd Graecisms and enigmatical conceits which disfigured the pages of Irish and Anglo-Saxon scholars⁴. But the utmost praise that they can claim is the acknowledgment that at least the enthusiasm of their pedantry was untainted by the faintest suspicion of a utilitarian tendency⁵! Gaul was indeed

¹ They had a saying that he who had not read Cicero had read nothing; but by Cicero they meant not the orator of Arpinum but the grammarian of Toulouse!

² *Usitata* (vulgar), *Assena*, *Semediā*, *Numeria*, *Metrofia*, *Lumbrosa*, *Sincolla*, *Belsabia*, *Bresina*, *Militana*, *Spela*, and *Polema*. (*Virg. Maronis Epitomae*, (ed. Mai) v. 2.) Thus for *ignis* there were eleven synonyms: *quoquihabis*, because it cooks; *ardon*, because it burns; *calax*, because it warms; *spiridon*, because it smokes; *rusin*, because it glows; *fragon*, because it crackles; *fumaton*, because it smells; *ustrar*, because it destroys; *vitius*, because it vivifies the limbs; *seluseus*, because it is obtained from flint; and *aeneon*, because it is put into a brazen vessel. *Ibid.* i. 3. In Huemer's edition (Teubner Series) the first passage is numbered xv. Cf. Denk, *op. cit.*, 203.

³ Drane, *op. cit.*, 30.

⁴ Such conceits had a peculiar fascination for the riddle-loving Anglo-Saxon mind. A letter from Boniface to Nithard contains the following passage: 'Hac de re universi aurilegi ambrones, apo ton grammaton agis frustratis adflicti...araneorum in cassum...teten-disse retia dinoscuntur; quia cata psalmistan thesaurizant et ignorant cui congregent illa.' *Ep.* 9, *M.G.H.*, *Epp.* iii. 250.

⁵ Even contemporaries who possessed some inkling of scholarly taste mocked at their absurdities, and suggested that Virgilius, one of their leading lights, must have been surnamed *Maro* accidentally instead of *Moro* (fool).

plunged in gloom. The plaintive phrases in which, in the opening pages of his *Historia Ecclesiastica Francorum*, Gregory of Tours at once bewailed and illustrated the inveterate illiteracy of his age are known to all. For him, as for the Tolosan pedants, grammatical concords existed only to be broken, though his transgressions, unlike theirs, were not deliberate, but simply the result of an ignorance not more deplorable than deplored. To Chilperic, 'the Nero and Herod of his time,' he left all attempts at reform. But even the self-confidence of the Merovingian monarch, who was equally ready as a Christian to revise the Creed, as a grammarian to enlarge the alphabet, and as a poet to cast aside with despotic disdain all the restraints imposed by the time-honoured laws of metre, was outweighed by his incompetence.

The seventh century found France distracted by internal troubles, and corruption and oppression rampant everywhere, the names of scholars like King Dagobert, who had learnt in Irish Schools, serving only to throw into sharp relief the gloom of the surrounding darkness.

The eighth revealed a new danger; a double invasion, by the Saxons in the north and the Saracens in the south.

But Charles Martel proved equal to the crisis. Driving back the Saxon intruders, he pushed the Frankish border eastwards, and, like Charles the Great in later days, sought to secure the allegiance of the subjects thus acquired by promoting their conversion. In the south the victory of Poitiers was but the first of a long series of battles which broke the power of the Saracen.

Nor was the Mayor's energy less conspicuous in other directions. The West Saxon missionary Boniface owed to him no small proportion of his success. Whether the immoralities of the priesthood, or the misdemeanours of the episcopate, or the abominations of the pagans were the object of his attack, the support of Charles could be confidently claimed. Literature and learning indeed were still almost entirely neglected, for neither Charles Martel nor Boniface himself, scholar though he was¹, had the leisure to foster education. But their cooperation was directly introductory to the Carolingian revival, and but for it the later cooperation of Charles the Great and Alcuin, if not impossible, would have been comparatively fruitless. The ground had first to be cleared. Before intellectual life could be resuscitated it was necessary on the one hand to deliver the kingdom from danger without and discord within, and on the other to teach bishops and abbots that they must do something more than hunt and fight and drink. Charles Martel's sons trod in their father's footsteps. The decrees issued by the ecclesiastical councils of 742 and 743 were framed no doubt by Boniface, but they owed their strength to the sanction and approval of Carloman. The bishops assented to the curtailment of their powers because they feared the sword of the indomitable Mayors; the Frankish Church was drawn into closer relations with the See of Rome because the Mayors willed it.

And under Pippin even in the sphere of learning

¹ An *ars grammatica* and fragments of an introductory treatise on versification written by him, perhaps while in England, still remain. Specht, *op. cit.*, 11.

there were faint glimpses of better things to come. Here and there some scholar sought with greater or less success to redeem the character of his school. It was still possible no doubt to believe that Tullius and Cicero were two distinct persons, or that in the days of Pisistratus Athens was the chief city of the Latin-speaking world¹. But good work was done at Utrecht by Abbot Gregory—whose pupils represented many nationalities and included even Anglo-Saxons—though the studies of his school may have been almost exclusively ecclesiastical²; at Metz Chrodegang drew up his famous rule and pressed upon his clergy the urgent duty of educating the young; at Salzburg Virgil, delving in the pages of Martianus Capella, startled and shocked an orthodox world by proclaiming the existence of the Antipodes; at St Gall the monk Winidhar began that life-work of transcription by which the foundations of its noble library were laid, and in the monasteries founded by Boniface, in the convent of the English Lioba, at Murbach and Reichenau and Epternach, even at St Wandrille's and St Martin's at Tours, there were signs that intellectual life, if still feeble, was not extinct³.

Symptoms of increasing vigour too were discernible at the Court. The Palace School, which seems to have maintained a precarious existence even under Merovingian rule⁴, though it had seldom found in the

¹ *Vita S. Eligii*, ap. d'Achery, *Spicilegium*, ii. 76 seqq. Cf. Denk, *op. cit.*, 270.

² Cf. *Vit. iii. Liudg.* c. 6, 'Saecularem litteraturam non multo opere scire curabat.'

³ Cf. Hauck, ii. 168–171. On the results of Boniface's work cf. Specht, *op. cit.*, 10–12, 266–268.

⁴ Cf. Specht, *op. cit.*, 3. Denk, *op. cit.*, 248. Masius, *op. cit.*, 107.

king a scholarly protector such as Dagobert, received a completer recognition. Pippin may have consigned it to the care of his queen¹, and Charles the Great, who could scarcely write, was not perhaps in his own person a valuable witness to its efficiency². But Pope Paul I. sent to Pippin for its library: *libros quantos reperire potuimus; id est antiphonale et responsale, insinuil artem grammaticam Aristolis (sic!), Dionisii Ariopagitis geometricam, orthografiam, grammaticam, omnes Graeco eloquio scriptas, nec non et horologium nocturnum*³; and even if the books were intended less for use than for ornament the fact that they were sent testifies to Pippin's known desire to foster learning.

The kingdom of the Franks indeed was ripe for a literary revival. It possessed already eager students, Frankish or Anglo-Saxon, whose ready sympathy and hearty cooperation were assured to all who sought to promote and organise the spread of learning.

And with the accession of Charles the Great the revival came. The new king was resolved that from the intellectual as from every other point of view his kingdom should be the first in Europe⁴. Owing to his own defective education indeed he could himself take little active part in the restoration of letters.

¹ Hauck, ii, 121.

² But it is the merest truism that inability to write, in an age when writing was a technical, almost a professional, accomplishment, was no conclusive proof of illiteracy.

³ *Codex Carolinus*, 24.

⁴ 'Er wollte sein Volk zum tonangebenden im ganzen Abendlande machen. Beim Antritte seiner Regierung hatte England solche führende Rolle in der Wissenschaft, nach wenigen Jahrzehnten musste es dieselbe an Frankreich abgeben.' Mönchemeier, *Amalar von Metz*, 7.

His brain teemed with ideas, but for their realisation he must perforce trust in large measure to others, men of lesser genius but greater skill. Yet he was none the less determined that his aims should be achieved. His first need was therefore to secure the services of the men best qualified by training and by taste to become the instruments of his will. And scholars accordingly came at his summons from every quarter of his dominions, far and near. 'Il conquerit aussi volontiers un savant qu'un ville¹.' His views in the matter were indeed too catholic in their scope for some among his subjects. 'He loved the foreigner,' says his biographer, half reproachfully, and he adds that the exchequer paid the penalty. The quaint story of the two Scots who, offering wisdom for sale in the market-place of some great town, were promptly enticed into the royal service²—one becoming the master of a mixed children's school which Charles himself examined at a later date, when he duly snubbed the aspirations of aristocratic ignorance³—is evidence doubtless rather of the fertile imagination of the monk of St Gall than of the real policy of Charles. Yet there is no doubt that his genius did instinctively overleap the narrowing barriers of national prejudice and welcomed learning and ability wherever it appeared. Peter of Tuscany came from Pisa at an early date to teach grammar and sharpen his ironic wit on the courtiers and scholars of the Palace. From 782 to 786 the Lombard Paulus Diaconus, longing all

¹ Laforêt, *Alcuin*, 27.

² *Monachus Sangallensis*, i. i.

³ *Ibid.* i. 3.

the while for his Italian fatherland and the studious retirement of Monte Cassino, was a reluctant member of the learned circle; the Aquileian Patriarch Paulinus, the Visigothic Theodulph, the Bavarian Arno and Leidrad, perhaps even the Irish Clement, were all at different times enlisted in the service of education. Yet among them all there was not one who completely and exactly satisfied the king's requirements. For he wanted a scholar who should be something more than a mere scholar—a man of receptive temper, ready to enter unreservedly into the wishes of another, to make them in fact his own, and then with equal ardour and ability to carry them out in action. The 'somewhat supercilious literati from beyond the Alps' were perhaps at small pains to conceal their contempt for 'the rude vigour and unlettered notions' of the half-barbarian Frank¹. Theodulph the Visigoth was a man of markedly independent character, one who would choose his own work and do it in his own way. Arno was primarily a diplomatist and an administrator rather than a scholar. And it was only in later years that Leidrad² and Clement the Irishman appeared at Charles' Court.

But in Alcuin, when in a peaceful breathing-space they met, not for the first time, at Parma in the spring of 781, the king secured at last the object of his search. For in Alcuin were united all the qualifications, so difficult to find in combination, which Charles desired, and which perhaps he had almost despaired of finding. A man of Teutonic race; learned, with a learning far above the level of the age; a born

¹ Mullinger, *op. cit.*, 42.

² In 782 he was in Tassilo's employ. Wattenbach, *G.Q.* i. 154.

teacher, a devotee of teaching, pupil and master in turn of the greatest school in Europe; sober, methodical, orthodox, and conservative; humble-minded also, and scrupulously conscientious; imbued, above all, with the profoundest respect and admiration for Charles himself, and the completest sympathy with his ecclesiastical and literary aspirations; he was the ideal scholar for Charles' purposes.

Arduous and varied tasks awaited execution: the revival of the Palace School; the superintendence of the king's own energetic attempts at self-education; the organisation of an educational system; the creation of a learned clergy; the revision of the liturgy so as to bring it into line with the Roman use; the emendation of Biblical and other manuscripts which bore traces on every page of the hopeless ignorance of Merovingian transcribers. And in Alcuin Charles discerned a man fitted alike by training, by temper, and by taste to undertake them all.

It was as the Master of the Palace School that he began his work. The double task of instilling into youthful pupils the rudiments of knowledge and of directing the studies and solving the difficulties of such as were of riper age was his main employment for fourteen years, whenever he was within the Frankish realm. And he fulfilled it with equal enthusiasm and success. It was no doubt Charles' known predilection for well-educated servants that brought aspirants to royal favour to seek in the learning of the Palace School a qualification for employment in the royal service. But it was the contagious enthusiasm and winning personality of Alcuin that enchained them

when they came, forging enduring fetters of affection and respect to bind together Master and pupils long after their original relationship was at an end. And his patient readiness to answer to the best of his ability, the questions, often foolish, occasionally not a little disconcerting, put to him by his pupils, by the king himself, eager for every kind of knowledge and not unwilling to press his teacher all the harder for an answer when he suspected his inability to give one, by the more gentle and submissive Princesses, or by others not of royal rank, endeared him to the older circle of learners, some of whom, Angilbert and Adalhard for example, must have regarded him almost in the light of a fellow-student rather than a Master. In the nature of the case the instruction of these elder members of the School could not but be irregular both in substance and in method. The king himself and others of the circle were frequently absent for months at a time, and, even when all were present, the subject of Alcuin's lessons must have been determined largely by the royal caprice, or by the accident which gave to one topic or another for the moment the greatest prominence in the minds of his pupils. Not a little of his best remembered instruction, it may well be, was given, so to speak, 'out of school hours,' in the informal discussions round the royal table which sometimes took the place of the customary readings of poetry or history or the works of the Fathers, or in private talks with individual members of his class¹.

¹ Masius, *op. cit.*, 154, insists on the existence at the Court of an 'academy,' an assemblage of all that was most learned and most

But as far as possible, and especially in dealing with his younger pupils, he was no doubt true to that principle of systematisation which he himself had learnt at York, and which he in turn commended so strongly to Eanbald II.

(The Palace School became, as Charles had wished, the foremost in the kingdom. As in the palmy days of Anglo-Saxon culture, when Aldfrith the scholar-king reigned in Northumbria, and Aldhelm, Egbert, and Ælbert (all men of royal blood) taught at Malmesbury and York, the bestborn were the leaders in the pursuit of learning. And, while the whole standard of lay education was thus uplifted by the king's well-known aversion to an unlettered nobility¹, the wide and liberal training of the School fitted many of its students to become the heads of other foundations, episcopal or monastic, which played an active part in the revival of learning. Alcuin was at the helm, but he was not the only teacher, and under his moderating guidance the keener intellect, the wider culture, the more exact scholarship of others could enure to the benefit of the School at large. Nor, when he abandoned Aachen for Tours, did the School at once decline. No one indeed exactly took his place. While in the early years of Charles the Italian scholars—Peter, Paulinus, and Paul—and then Alcuin himself, had held

brilliant in the kingdom. ‘Bestanden hat sie wirklich, dafür giebt die Litteratur und insbesondere die Dichtung des Hofes genügenden Beweis, und ihr letzter, obschon nicht ihr einziger Zweck war sicherlich *Belehrung*. Nur dass diese zumeist die freieren Formen der Rede und Gegenrede, oft der blossen Unterhaltung annehmen mochte.’

¹ Mullinger: *art. Schools in D.C.A.*

undisputed sway, after Alcuin's departure no one apparently definitely took the lead, and Fredegis and Theodulph, Angilbert and Einhard, perhaps Dungal and Clement the Scot, helped or hindered one another on equal terms in the business of maintaining its reputation¹. But one of Alcuin's own obscure and fanciful poems seems to express his satisfaction, in the main, with the conduct of the School²; the controversy with the *pueri Aegyptiaci* and other dissensions bear witness to its continued vitality; and, as long as Charles lived, it remained the centre of an active intellectual life, the source of a literature which was neither wholly scholastic nor wholly monastic in its character or in its origin, but had in both respects as well something of a courtly tinge³.

But the reinvigoration of the Palace School was only one of the measures by which Charles sought to promote the restoration of letters. The School was to be a model and a centre of learned influence, but if success was to be achieved the model must be imitated, the central institution supplemented by analogous foundations throughout the kingdom⁴.

And to secure this, in an age when education was of necessity almost entirely in the hands of the Church, the first step was obviously to create a learned body of clergy. It was with this end in view that Charles,

¹ Cf. Monod, *Études*, 50.

² *Carm.* xxvi.

³ Monod, *op. cit.*, 53.

⁴ Cf. the preface to *Cap.* 30, authorising the Homiliary of Paulus Diaconus: 'Ut nostrarum ecclesiarum ad meliora semper proficiat status, oblitteratam pene majorum nostrorum desidia reparare vigilant studio litterarum satagimus officinam, et ad pernoscenda studia liberalium artium nostro etiam quos possumus invitamus exemplo.'

advancing here beyond his predecessors¹, insisted in one decree after another on the possession of at least a specified minimum of learning by every officiating cleric.

The series begins with a Capitulary, generally assigned to the early years of his reign², which orders the suspension, and in cases of obduracy the deprivation, of priests too ignorant to discharge their functions properly. A more exhaustive enactment followed in the '*Admonitio Generalis*' of March 23, 789³. This, while insisting on a preliminary inquiry as to both *fides et vita* of candidates for ordination, required further that every bishop should periodically examine the priests of his diocese to ascertain whether they understood the formularies of the Church, and could explain them to their people⁴. It ordained moreover⁵ that reading schools should be established, that faulty manuscripts—educational, biblical, or liturgical

¹ Hauck: ii. 239. 'Neu war dass er ein Minimum theologischen Wissens als unerlässlich von jedem Priester verlangte. Die Prüfung der Ordinanden, welche gemäss dem neunten Kanon der Synode von Nicäa vorgenommen werden sollte, erstreckte er auch auf die theologische Bildung der Kleriker.' Cf. *Cap.* 22, § 2, 'Eorum qui ad ordinandum veniunt *fides et vita* prius ab episcopo diligenter discutitur.' *Cap.* 116, containing questions for a visitation of the clergy, opens with the assertion 'in palatio regis inventum habent, ut presbyteri non ordinentur priusquam examinentur,' the examination apparently assuming much the same form as the interrogatories at the visitation.

² *Cap.* 19, §§ 15, 16.

³ *Cap.* 22.

⁴ § 70.

⁵ § 72, 'Ut scholae legentium puerorum fiant. Psalmos, notas, cantus, compotum, grammaticam per singula monasteria vel episcopia et libros catholicos bene emendate, quia saepe, dum bene aliqui Deum rogare cupiunt, sed per inemendatos libros male rogant. Et pueros vestros non sinite eos vel legendo vel scribendo corrumpere; et si opus est evangelium, psalterium, et missale scribere, perfectae aetatis homines scribant cum omni diligentia.'

—which bore the traces of Merovingian ignorance, should be carefully revised, and that in future for the work of transcription none but competent scribes of full age should be employed.

But the fullest exposition of the royal policy appeared in a document which has been styled the Charter of education for the Middle Ages, the famous circular letter addressed by Charles to the Archbishops, Bishops, and Abbots of his realm.

‘Be it known to your Devotion, pleasing to God,’ so runs the only copy extant¹, ‘that we and our faithful have judged it well that, in the bishoprics and monasteries committed by Christ’s favour to our charge, besides the due observance of a regular and holy life, care shall be had for the study of letters, that those to whom God has given the ability to learn may receive instruction, each according to his several capacity. And this, that, just as obedience to the rule gives order and beauty to your acts, so zeal in teaching and learning may impart the like graces to your words, and thus those who seek to please God by living aright may not fail to please Him also by right speaking. For it is written “by thy words shalt thou be justified or condemned”; and though it is indeed better to do the right than to know it, yet it is needful also to know the right before we can do it. Every one therefore must learn what it is that he would fain ac-

¹ Addressed to Baugulf, Abbot of Fulda, 780-802. The date usually assigned to the letter, 787, is purely conjectural. Baugulf’s election in 780 and Charles’ coronation in 800 mark the extreme limits within which its publication must have fallen. Hauck, ii. 186, n. 6, and Monod, *op. cit.*, 57, incline to make it almost simultaneous with the *Admonitio Generalis*.

comply, and his mind will the more fully grasp the duty which lies before him if his tongue errs not in the service of Almighty God. And, if false speaking should thus be shunned by all men, how much more must those exert themselves to shun it who have been chosen for this very purpose, to be the servants of the truth!

'But in many letters received by us in recent years from divers monasteries, informing us of the prayers offered upon our behalf at their sacred services by the brethren there dwelling, we have observed that though the sentiments were good the language was uncouth, the unlettered tongue failing through ignorance to interpret aright the pious devotion of the heart.

'And hence we have begun to fear that, if their skill in writing is so small, so also their power of rightly comprehending the Holy Scriptures may be far less than is befitting; and it is known to all that, if verbal errors are dangerous, errors of interpretation are still more so. We exhort you, therefore, not only not to neglect the study of letters but to apply yourselves thereto with that humble perseverance which is well-pleasing to God, that so you may be able with the greater ease and accuracy to search into the mysteries of the Holy Scriptures. For, as in the sacred pages there are images and tropes and other similar figures, no one can doubt that the quickness with which the reader apprehends the spiritual sense will be proportionate to the extent of his previous instruction in letters. But let the men chosen for this task be such as are both themselves able and willing to learn and eager withal to impart their learning to others. And

let the zeal with which the work is done equal the earnestness with which we now ordain it. For we desire that you may be marked, as behoves the soldiers of the Church, within by devotion, and without by wisdom—chaste in your life, learned in your speech—so that if any come to you to call upon the Divine Master, or to behold the excellence of the religious life, they may be not only edified by your aspect when they regard you, but instructed by your wisdom when they hear you read or chant, and may return home rejoicing and giving thanks to God Most High.

‘Fail not, as you would enjoy our favour, to send copies of this letter to all your suffragans and to every monastery...Farewell!’

Other capitularies proved the king's determination to achieve his purpose. One, a schedule drawn up perhaps for some visitation by one of the royal *Missi*, required the clergy to be able not only to recite the Offices and chant the Psalms, but to comprehend the meaning of the ecclesiastical formularies, to undertake the teaching of catechumens, and to instruct their flocks on holy days with lessons drawn from the Canons, the Homilies, and Gregory's *Pastoral Cure*¹. Another, dating from 805, prescribed inquiries during the visitation, *de lectionibus: de cantu: de scribis, ut non vitiose scribant: de notariis: de caeteris disciplinis: de compoto: de medicinali arte*². A third, probably going beyond the king's own demands, and enumerating under fifteen heads the things which ‘every ecclesiastic’ must know, required further an acquaintance with the

¹ Cap. 38.

² Cap. 43.

'Pastoral Letter' of Gelasius, and the ability to write letters and charters¹. And a fourth, containing the *Interrogationes Examinationis* of some Bavarian bishop, even insisted that every man should send his son to school and there let him remain till he had received a fitting education². How far, if at all, the issue of these Capitularies was due to Alcuin's influence it is impossible to decide, partly because the dates of the Capitularies themselves are in many cases doubtful, and partly because the information forthcoming as to Alcuin's own whereabouts and doings at any given time in the years 782—796 is so scanty. That their tenour commanded his entire approval, however, there can be no doubt, and it is at least probable that more than one of them may have been actually drawn up by him. The famous circular letter, especially, with its insistence on the spiritual sense of Scripture and on the need for enthusiasm as well as ability in those who were to be called upon to teach, seems to breathe his very spirit. In this, as in other matters, the traditions of his early life completely harmonised with the policy of Charles. Much of the legislation of the Capitularies may be paralleled in the earlier action of the English Church. The Council of Cloveshoo in 747 had anticipated the demand for inquiry into the *scientia fidei* as well as the *morum probitas* of candidates for

¹ *Cap.* 117.

² *Cap.* 116, § 12, 'Ut unusquisque filium suum litteras ad discendum mittat, et ibi cum omni sollicitudine permaneat usque dum bene instructus perveniat.' Cf. Hauck, ii. 236, n. 4. *Cap.* 35, § 32 (802), requires all laymen to know at least the Lord's Prayer and the Creed by heart, and others forbid persons not so qualified to accept the office of god-parents. Hauck, ii. 272. Specht, *op. cit.*, 28 seqq.

ordination¹; had insisted that priests should be able not only themselves to understand the meaning of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Offices of Baptism and the Mass, but to translate and explain them in the vulgar tongue for the benefit of their flocks²; and had urged Bishops and Abbots and Abbesses to ceaseless exertions for the maintenance or the recovery of ecclesiastical learning³.

And it was Alcuin himself who insisted on the absolute necessity of clerical education, and exhorted Æthelhard of Canterbury⁴ and Eanbald of York⁵ to train in their Cathedral schools scholars who might in time be qualified to take their place⁶.

The king's exertions were not confined to exhortations addressed, as in the Capitularies, directly or indirectly to the Church at large. His restriction of promotion to men of education acted no doubt as a powerful incentive to diligent study, and apart from this general and negative rebuke to ignorance and

¹ c. 6, 'Episcopi...nullum...ordinate, nisi prius ejus vitam qualis extiterit, vel tunc morum probitas ac scientia fidei existat, manifeste perquirant,' etc. Cf. Synod of Pincanhale, c. 6, 'nisi probatae vitae fuerint et officium suum rite implere possint.'

² c. 10.

³ c. 7.

⁴ *Ep.* 128 [85], 'Tua...sapientia ..deducat in domum Dei lectionis studium, ut sint ibi legentes juvenes et chorum canentium et librorum exercitatio.'

⁵ *Ep.* 114 [72]. Cf. *Ep.* 226 [167], 'Sacrae lectionis studia omnimodis renovate vobiscum. Ne pereat labor noster in librorum collectione.' *Ep.* 209 [149] (to Calvinus): 'si scolam legentium habere possis.'

⁶ Cf. *Ep.* 169 [91] (to Arno): the clergy of his diocese 'scholares quoque habeant, et diligenter discere eos faciant psalmos, et cantilenam ecclesiasticam, ut in singulis ecclesiis cursus agatur cotidiane laudis Dei'; and *Ep.* 161 [296] (possibly also to Arno), 'Nunc velim te propriare in patriam et ordinare puerorum lectiones, quis grammaticam discat, quis epistolas et parvos libellos legat, quis sanctam scripturam sobria mente haurire dignus sit.'

idleness he was ready on occasion to reprove individually men of the highest position, an archbishop if need should be¹, if they, through indolence, neglected the education of their people or suffered illiteracy to disgrace their households.

And his efforts were crowned with deserved success.

It may indeed be doubted whether, from the moment that his circular letter appeared, 'la France se convertit en un vaste Athénée; partout elle se couvrit d'écoles, qui répandirent les lumières dans toutes les classes de la société².'

Yet a great effect was certainly produced. When it became clear that without learning there could be no ecclesiastical advancement, the self-interest and ambition of the clergy were at once enlisted in its behalf. Cathedral and monastic schools alike were spurred to fresh exertions. Under Leidrad at Lyons, before the end of Charles' reign, the *schola cantorum* had produced many pupils qualified in their turn to act as teachers, while in the *schola lectorum* even the hidden meanings of the Scriptures were appreciated³. At Orleans, under Theodulph, the liberal arts were studied, and many manuscripts of wonderful beauty and accuracy written in his *scriptorium*⁴. And these famous foundations did not stand alone.

Nor is it to be supposed that Theodulph was the only prelate who insisted on obedience to the decree

¹ Cf. *Ep. Carol.* 16 (Jaffé, *Monumenta Carolina*, 369), probably to Archbishop Lul of Mainz.

² Laforêt, *Alcuin*, 69.

³ Abel and Simson, *Jahrbücher*, ii. 577.

⁴ Cf. his poem 'De septem liberalibus artibus in quadam pictura depictis.' *M. G. H.*, *Poet. Aev. Car.* i. 544.

once issued by the Council of Vaison for the instruction of all who sought it by their parish priests, the priests receiving nothing by way of remuneration except the freewill offerings of their scholars' relations and friends¹. Arno in his Bavarian province faithfully carried out the policy of Charles, insisting on the theological education of priests and the maintenance of cathedral schools², besides founding the Salzburg library and establishing the Salzburg chronicle (*Annales Juvavenses Majores*)—one of those historical works which owed their existence to the Carolingian revival and their inspiration perhaps to the *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Bede³. And it has been well remarked that the answers to the inquiries about baptism addressed by Charles to the higher clergy towards the end of his reign bear witness to his success in diffusing among them no inconsiderable theological culture⁴.

¹ 'Presbyteri per villas et vicos scholas habeant,' he wrote, almost in the words of the Vaison canon, 'et si quilibet fidelium suos parvulos ad discendas litteras eis commendare vult, eos suscipere ac docere non renuant, sed cum summa caritate eos doceant...Cum ergo eos docent, nihil ab eis pretii pro hac re exigant, excepto quod eis parentes caritatis studio sua voluntate obtulerint.' Cf. *Cap.* 116, § 12, and *Cap.* 120, §§ 5 and 7, and *Conc. Mogunt.* (813) c. 45, 'Dignum est ut filios suos donent ad scholam sive ad monasteria sive foras presbyteris ut fidem catholicam recte discant et orationem dominicam.'

² Cf. the Pastoral Letter in Westenrieder, *Beyträge z. Vaterländische Historie*, i. pp. 22 ff., which Hauck (ii. 448, n. 2) regards as summarising the decrees of a Bavarian Synod held in August 798. § xviii. p. 23, 'Et hoc considerat episcopus ut ipsi presbyteri non sint idiothae, sed sacras scripturas legant et intelligant, et secundum traditionem Romanae ecclesiae possint instruere.' Cf. *ibid.* p. 26, 'Episcopus autem unusquisque in civitate sua seolam constituat et sapientem doctorem qui secundum traditionem Romanorum possit instruere et lectionibus vacare,' etc.

³ More than one German chronicle first took shape as a continuation of the short chronology in Bede's *De temporum ratione*, or of some Anglo-Saxon Annals. Cf. Monod, *op. cit.*, 74, and Wattenbach, *G. Q.*, i. 138 ff.

⁴ Hauck, ii. 181.

But it was in the monastic schools, as a rule, that the best results were to be seen. A French writer has described the monasteries as the Vestal Virgins who kept the sacred fire of learning alight through the gloom of the Dark Ages. That fire, it must be admitted, had of late years been burning very low. But now the dying embers were fanned again into a flame. At Corbie under Adalhard, at St Riquier under Angilbert, who reckoned on having at least a hundred pupils always in his school, at Metz and Fleury, at St Amand's and St Wandrille's, and in many other monasteries, there was a wonderful revival.

The course of study everywhere followed the traditional lines, but here one, and there another branch of education received special attention—at Metz music, at St Wandrille's in the abbey itself, whose rulers had hitherto been famous chiefly as the Nimrods of the cloister, music also, and in the cell of St Saturninus hard by arithmetic and caligraphy, at Murbach and elsewhere the crowning science of theology¹.

That truth, too, which nearly four centuries later was embodied by Geoffrey of Sainte Barbe in the epigram *claustrum sine armario quasi castrum sine armamentario* had even now been laid to heart. The Palace library was indeed the largest in the kingdom, but not a few religious houses possessed rich collections of manuscripts. At Reichenau, for example, there were in 822 four hundred and fifty volumes; at St Riquier, in 831, two hundred and thirty odd, most of them

¹ Hauck, ii. 190. Cf. the *Statuta Monasterii Murbacensis* of Simpert, Abbot of Murbach, and perhaps Bishop of Augsburg, ap. Pez, *Thesaurus* II. iii. 371, cited by Specht, *op. cit.*, 23.

procured by Angilbert; Arno is said to have had more than a hundred and fifty copied (it is to him that many of Alcuin's letters owe their preservation); a constant mutual borrowing for purposes of transcription prevailed; and when new works were written the author's words were sometimes taken down simultaneously by several amanuenses, that copies might be available at once for distribution among his friends.

And when Alcuin was at last allowed to resign the direction of the Palace School, it was only that at Tours he might further Charles' aims by establishing there a model for cloister schools throughout the realm. The ancient fame of St Martin's for discipline and learning, sadly eclipsed by the anarchy of recent centuries, was to be revived; the school to be raised to the foremost place among its fellows.

So far as learning, at any rate, was concerned, the king was not disappointed. A letter sent to him by Alcuin not long after his arrival at Tours described the ordered energy with which the new Abbot strove to fulfil his master's mandate. To some, he wrote, he imparted 'the honey of Holy Scripture,' to some 'the old wine of the ancient learning,' to some 'the apples of grammatical subtlety,' while others again were initiated in the mysteries of the stars—the Master making himself all things to all men, that by his means the largest possible number of scholars might be trained for the service of God and the honour of the kingdom¹.

The tone of the school, the principal object of the training, at Tours was no doubt preeminently ecclesiastical, far more markedly so than had been the case at

¹ *Ep.* 121 [78].

the Palace. Yet there is room to doubt whether Alcuin's personal attitude towards the old learning had materially altered. The seven liberal arts had always been for him the steps by which learners might mount *ad altissimum evangelicae perfectionis culmen*¹. Years before, he had exhorted Riculf to prefer the Four Gospels to the Twelve Aeneids. Perhaps, indeed, as he drew nearer to the grave, the vanity of earthly things, the evil of the old heathen life, impressed him more and more. But in 799 and 801 he still quoted Virgil in his letters²; and the biographer's story of his forbidding the study of the poet to his monks is possibly only a figment of the fertile monastic imagination³. At Tours, with chilling blood, in the evening of his days, he sowed still the same seed of wisdom as at York in the dawn of his manhood, remembering the exhortation of the Preacher: 'In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand, for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good⁴.' His fame, too,

¹ *Ep.* 280 [217], to the monks of Ireland. Cf. Specht (*op. cit.*, 48 seqq.), on the attitude of those who undoubtedly approved of classical studies, 'Ohne in den Geist der klassischen Schriften tiefer einzudringen, benutzte man diese zumeist nur als die vom Altertum her überlieferten Schulbücher, die für den grammatisch rhetorischen Unterricht und daher für ein erspriessliches Bibelstudium unentbehrlich galten.'

² *Ep.* 175 [116] (to Adalhard). *Ep.* 225 [166] (to Theodulph). Cf. *Epp.* 251 [187] and 309 [243].

³ So Poole, *Illustrations*, 23. Hauck seems to take the same view. It has been noted that Sigulf, the hero of the story, was the abbot of Ferrières, from which came Servatus Lupus (Drane, *op. cit.*, 121). There appears at any rate to be little ground for holding with Dupuy that the 'Virgilius vester' in Alcuin's letters to Charles is a sign that he quoted him only out of complaisance, or for suspecting him of designedly concealing from the king in *Ep.* 121 [78] the narrowed scope of his instructions. Cf. Mullinger, *op. cit.*, 112.

⁴ *apud Ep.* 121 [78].

drew to the monastery students from his old home as well as from the schools of Ireland in such numbers that the envious monks of Tours prayed for deliverance from the Britons who swarmed to the Abbot's lodging like bees to their hive¹. And in his new sphere, cut off from the library at Aachen and thrown back upon the scanty resources which his predecessors had accumulated at St Martin's, he turned his thoughts with wistful longing to that noble array of books at York, the fruit of Aelbert's labours and his own, to which his master had left him heir, but which he designed to pass at his death, at least for the greater part, now that he had finally abandoned the idea of returning to his fatherland, to the Archbishop of the day and his successors. With Charles' permission he sent some of his scholars to Northumbria, that the most pressing needs of the library at Tours might be supplied, and the rich fruits of learning might be found, not only in the gardens of York, but also by the pleasant waters of the Loire².

Thus armed, in spite of failing eyesight and decreasing strength, he set himself to grapple manfully with the *Turonica rusticitas*³ by which he was surrounded, seeking to overcome the malpractices which, under cover of the Merovingian darkness, had crept into the writing schools—the confusion of *b*, *v*, *f*, and *u*,

¹ *Vit. Alc.* 18, 'Aigulfus praeterea presbyter, Engelsaxo et ipse, ad eundem patrem visitandum Turonis venit. Cumque ante januam ejus domus coepisset adsistere, ecce quidam Turonensium fratrum... conloquebantur ad invicem: Venit iste Britto vel Scotto ad illum alterum Brittonem, qui intus jacet. O Deus, libera istud monasterium de istis Brittonibus! nam, sicut apes undique ad matrem revertuntur, ita hi omnes ad istum veniunt.'

² *Ep.* 121 [78].

³ *Ep.* 172 [112], 'Ego itaque licet parum proficiens cum *Turonica* cotidie pugno rusticitate.'

of *d* and *t*, of *i* and *e*; the misuse of the aspirate; the disuse of punctuation, and the like—yet more than once himself betrayed by the carelessness or ignorance of his amanuenses¹; employing the more advanced scholars to aid him in the collection and verification of patristic citations for his controversial work²; studying with them not only the Scriptures and the Fathers, but the acute disquisitions of the wise men of this world on the nature of things³; giving to each the work for which he seemed best fitted⁴; turning aside from time to time to attempt the solution of some knotty problem referred to him by his comrades and successors in the Palace School⁵, and in the circle which immediately surrounded him ever ready to hear, and as far as possible to answer, the doubts and questionings of all⁶. And so he

¹ Cf. *Epp.* 149 [100] and 172 [112]. The *Orthografia Albini Magistri*, an 'anti-Barbarus' warning its readers against such errors, was not improbably written for use at Tours. It is based in part on Bede's similar work, but Alcuin had to deal with difficulties of which Bede apparently knew nothing. A benefactor, *beneficus*, is not identical with a poisoner, *veneficus*, nor are drinking and living, *bibere* and *vivere*, interchangeable terms, but the corruption of both speech and spelling due to the struggle between the Gallo-Roman and Tudesque tongues then proceeding made it easy to confuse them.

² Cf. *Ep.* 149 [100], 'Tantum detur ei spatium ut quiete et diligenter liceat illi cum pueris suis considerare patrum sensus.'

³ Rabanus Maurus, *De Universo*, prefatory letter to Haymo (*M.G.H. Epp.* v. 470); the reference is not improbably to his studies at Tours.

⁴ So Amalarius apparently was engaged specially in liturgical studies. Mönchemeier, *op. cit.*, 16.

⁵ Cf. the correspondence as to the *Saltus Lunae* and the *pueri Aegyptiaci*; *Ep.* 162 [252], on the gender of 'rubus' and the forms 'dispicere' and 'despicere' ('Miror,' Alcuin exclaims, 'cur Flaccinae pigritiae socordiam septiplicis sapientiae decus, dulcissimus meus David, interrogare voluisset de quaestionibus palatinis; emeritaeque nomen militiae in castra revocare pugnancia, ut tumultuosas militum mentes sedaret'); and *Ep.* 307 [240], a reply to the question 'cujusdam sapientis Graeci, de precio salutis humanae, cui daretur.'

⁶ Cf. *Ep.* 143 [96], *supra*, p. 103.

worked on almost to the end, fighting the old fight, teaching the old truths, cheered amid the depression of weakness and ill-health by the belief that he was doing the best that could be done in striving to preserve for posterity the heritage of learning painfully acquired in ages past by men of greater intellectual stature.

Pupils came to him from all parts. Arno of Salzburg sent some¹, Count Chrodgar others²; from Reichenau came Wadilcoz; from Fulda, Hatto and Rabanus Maurus³, sent by Abbot Ratgar, and preceded probably by Haymo and Samuel, afterwards Bishops respectively of Halberstadt and Worms: and, from some unknown place, possibly Metz, Amalarius the liturgiologist.

Such men in after years reckoned it an honour to have been numbered among his pupils, and when he died they felt that Europe had lost her greatest scholar⁴.

And yet it is true that if he is judged 'by his properly didactic writings...the best that can be said is that he gave to Western Europe imperfectly understood fragments of the wisdom of the ancients⁵.' The

¹ Hildegard (*Epp.* 156 [107], 158 [92] etc.) and others (*Ep.* 112 [70]).

² *Ep.* 224 [165] (801): 'Bonum infantulum nobis ad erudiendum direxistis, etiam cum fratre valde laudabili.'

³ Hauck (ii. 152, n. 2) gives plausible reasons for rejecting the contention of Duemmler (*Neues Archiv*, xviii. 67) that Rabanus must have come to Tours before 802, and that consequently Baugulf, and not Ratgar, must have been the Abbot who sent him.

⁴ 'Albinum, doctissimum magistrum nostrae regionis,' says Amalarius (*De ord. antiph.* c. 67). So Theganus (*Epistola Hattoni*) speaks of him as *summus scholasticus*, and the Monk of St Gall describes him as 'in omni latitudine scripturarum supra ceteros modernorum temporum exercitatus.' Cf. the *Testimonia* cited by Froben, i. lxxviii.—lxxxvi.

⁵ West, *op. cit.*, 113.

Grammar, that tedious dialogue between a stolid Saxon and a pertinacious Frank, with the Master, *i.e.* Alcuin, acting the part of a somewhat reluctant referee, has little to recommend it beyond the fact that nothing better, perhaps, was obtainable by his pupils. Notker, indeed, declared a century later that, compared with it, the works of Nicomachus, Donatus, Doritheus, and Priscian were as nothing. But modern criticism has reversed the verdict, and, attributing to Priscian and Donatus whatever is good in the compilation, has found in it little that is original except its form¹ and its mistakes².

The Dialogue *De Rhetorica et Virtutibus*³, in which the *dramatis personae* are Alcuin himself and his royal patron, has fared even worse; for its meagre reproduction of the Ciceronian treatises⁴, occasionally ob-

¹ The form of a dialogue adopted by Alcuin in his treatises on the *Trivium* is characteristically Anglo-Saxon, and no doubt essentially typical of his own method.

² Mullinger, 78; West, 101. The first part of the *Grammar* consists of a dialogue between 'the Master' and 'the Disciples' on the value of wisdom and the number and nature of the Liberal Arts. In the second part, the *Grammar* proper, the interlocutors are a Frank of fourteen and a Saxon of fifteen years, and the Master himself. The work deals in reality with little more than etymology and accidence, though the twenty-six 'species' of grammar are enumerated as 'words, letters, syllables, clauses, sayings, speeches, definitions, feet, accents, punctuation marks, critical marks, orthographies, analogies, etymologies, glosses, distinctions, barbarisms, solecisms, faults, metaplasms, figurations, tropes, prose, metres, fables, and histories.' The *Orthografia* already mentioned fills up some of the gaps in a treatise which after all was intended, as Masius observes (*op. cit.*, 169), not so much to serve as an introduction to the subject as to repeat and explain instruction already received.

³ 'Karl...wollte auch die Rhetorik hauptsächlich nur wegen ihrer Bedeutung für die *quaestiones civiles* erlernen. Alcuin fügte deshalb als Anhang seiner Rhetorik noch eine kurze Ethik, d. h. eine Abhandlung über die vier Kardinaltugenden, hinzu, auf welchen alles rechtlich sittliche Handeln der Menschen beruhen müsse.' Specht, *op. cit.*, 122.

⁴ Alcuin assumes in it that the learner will use the *De Inventione*

scured by second-hand reminiscences of Aristotle, and illustrated by examples drawn from Scripture, fails to attain even the low level of interest which the *Grammar* possesses. And, to complete the dreary catalogue¹, the perfunctory *De Dialectica*, based on Isidore, Boethius, and the pseudo-Augustine, has drawn down the almost unanimous contempt of the historians of philosophy².

But there could be no greater fallacy than to judge Alcuin as a teacher by the writings in which he thus sought so to abridge or simplify the works of earlier

(*ibid.* 117), but Cassiodorus is his main authority: cf. Masius, *op. cit.*, 169.

¹ The writings on music, geometry, and arithmetic mentioned by the biographer are not known to be extant. On astronomy, apart from the letters, there are two short treatises on the *saltus lunae* and on leap-year. Much has been made in this connection of Alcuin's superstitious readiness to assume a supernatural cause for unusual phenomena, and Rabanus Maurus has been praised for his great superiority in this respect. (Cf. Monnier, *op. cit.*, 82-3, and Mullinger, *op. cit.*, 88-9 and 147-8.) No doubt he was not above the current superstitions of the age; he was perfectly ready to believe that prodigies might mark the death of a holy man, as his life of St Vedast shows, but the particular instances cited to prove his credulousness, his answer to Charles' inquiry as to the disappearance of the planet Mars, and his supposed belief that Liudger's soul appeared to him in the guise of a comet, scarcely support the charge. For in the first case, while the suggestion of *Ep.* 149 that the Nemean Lion had detained the planet was admittedly the merest joke, Alcuin essayed a scientific explanation both in that letter and in *Ep.* 155, and expressly asserted his belief that nothing supernatural had occurred, 'nec enim prodigiosum reor...sed naturali sui cursus ordine.' And in the second the biographer of Liudger (*Vita* ii.), on whose authority the story rests, overlooked the rather important fact that Alcuin predeceased his hero by several years.

² Cf. Prantl, *Geschichte der Logik*, ii, 16-18. So Hauréau (*Histoire de la Philosophie Scolastique*, i, 26-27), 'Ce qu'il ignore surtout c'est la philosophie...Il écrit souvent des mots qu'il comprend mal...Il expliquait fort mal les cinq voirs de Porphyre, et plus mal encore d'après Boèce les Catégories, les Topiques, et les Arguments d'Aristote.' Cf. Mullinger, 88; West, 84. But Picavet (*Philosophie Scolastique*) vindicates his claim to be recognised as 'le père de la scolastique en France,...le premier auteur de la philosophie qui, à travers le moyen âge, la renaissance, et les temps modernes, s'est développée jusques à Kant, Fichte, Schelling, et Hegel.'

scholars as to meet the scanty requirements of his own pupils. The compilation of such treatises was but a single phase, the least successful and the least important phase, of his educational activity. Of the infinitely more important part—his personal exertions, day by day and hour by hour, in the verbal instruction of his pupils—it is far less easy, but far more necessary, to form a just estimate. The materials on which that estimate can be based are hardly satisfactory. His own incidental references to his work, indeed, reveal the born teacher: patient, enthusiastic, indefatigable, careful not to overload the mind of the learner by giving him too much to learn, striving literally to educate, to call out in each the latent intellectual power, as—to use his own simile—a man strikes out of the flint the fire which has all along only been hidden in it. But they afford but slight indications of the character of his work. The vague, if heartfelt, eulogies of pupils like Amalarius of Metz give little more help. The justification of those eulogies must be sought in the lives of the scholars whom he trained, and in the progress of that revival of organised education over which he presided almost from its inception, and which they, as his successors, were called upon to promote.

At St Martin's itself, where, for thirty years after his death, his pupil Fredegis ruled as Abbot, the principles he had laid down were observed only for a brief period. The abbey indeed soon obtained an unenviable notoriety as the place where, above all others, his rule that learning should be given and not sold¹

¹ Cf. *Carm.* cxi., 'Si potare velis, nummos praestare debes; Discere si cupias, gratis quod quaeris habebis.'

was trampled under foot. Yet learning at least was still there, and, before the Norman raids in the middle of the ninth century inflicted on the abbey damage from which it took two centuries to recover, the scribe Adalbold had formed within its walls the famous Tours school of handwriting, the Carolingian minuscule¹, in a beautiful and characteristic form, peculiar to the manuscripts written in the *scriptorium* at Tours or under its influence.

The Palace School, where he had worked in earlier years, enjoyed a somewhat longer period of prosperity. It ceased indeed at Charles' death to be the intellectual heart of the Empire, focussing and fusing together the forces which were making for culture in every

¹ There seems to be no valid reason for ascribing to Alcuin any share in the Carolingian reform of handwriting except in so far as, by his own example or through the mss. he brought or sent for from York, he may have recommended the Anglo-Saxon script for imitation. If indeed the *Octateuch* of Tours was written before his death (Berger, *Histoire de la Vulgate*, 204, 246), the Tours hand must have already been in process of formation; but Prof. K. Menzel (*Die Trierer Adalbold-Handschrift*, p. 5) gives grounds for doubting, whether—with his failing eyesight—he himself was responsible for any sweeping change, and finds the condition of the Tours *scriptorium* under his rule more accurately represented by *Cod. evl.* of the Köln Cathedral Library, which according to him 'zeigt gerade dass dort sehr verschiedene Schreiber neben einander thätig waren, solche welche die verbesserte Schrift schon mit Sicherheit handhabten, und solche welche an den cursiven Eigenthümlichkeiten mehr oder weniger festhielten. Ja es befanden sich, was ja auch sonst bekannt ist, Angelsachsen darunter, welche in Tours fortfuhren die Schrift zu schreiben, die sie in ihrer Heimat gelernt hatten.' The date assigned to the ms. is 798-804; cf. Arndt, *Schrifttafeln*, ii., where six facsimiles (33, 34, and 37-40) of the writing are given. L. Traube (*Neues Archiv*, xxvi. 281) asserts as the result of modern research 'dass der grosse angelsächsische Gelehrte mit der Entwicklung der Form der Schrift gar nichts zu thun hatte.' If the Carolingian chrysograph Gospels, as M. Berger holds, can be traced to the Palace School, the Anglo-Saxon influence to which they certainly owed their inspiration may have come through Alcuin. Tyrwhitt (art. 'Miniatures' in *D.C.A.*) suggests that one of his pupils may have written the famous Utrecht Psalter.

quarter, ensuring at once the participation of the laity in the education of the day, and the maintenance in that education of a wide and liberal character¹. But it was still maintained; Clement the Scot² and other scholars presided over it, with substantial if not always uncontested credit; and under Charles the Bald, when a general decline of letters seemed to have set in, it was illuminated by the presence of a more brilliant scholar than it had ever known in its palmiest days, Johannes Scotus Erigena.

¹ It was not only in the political sphere that, when the strong hand of Charles was withdrawn and the reins of government passed into the nerveless grasp of Louis the Pious, the tendency of the Eastern and Western parts of the Empire to drift asunder became apparent. Almost from the day of Charles' death the annals of learning in East and West began to differ. In the West for many years it remained productive, and if Louis was unsympathetic towards any but ecclesiastical learning, and his narrowness was reflected in the writings of more than one hagiographer (Specht, *op. cit.*, 53), scholars found in Charles the Bald an enthusiastic patron. Claudius of Turin, Agobard of Lyons, Hincmar of Rheims, John the Scot, are names that would lend lustre to any age, and the literary productions of the ninth century, in variety, originality, and brilliancy, the 'courtly epic' of Ermoldus Nigellus, the political pamphlets of Agobard, the classical criticisms of Servatus Lupus, the canonical writings of Hincmar and the authors of the False Decretals, the daring speculations of Erigena, the histories of Nithard, Freulf, and Ado, the chronicle of St Wandrille, the biographies of Adelhard and Wala, exceeded anything accomplished in the reign of Charles himself. In the East, on the other hand, if there were scholars and schoolmasters and scholastic treatises, learned and laborious, little was produced, if the annals are excepted, outside the narrow field of ecclesiastical pedagogy. The work of St Gall in its golden age contrasted with the ideals of Charles the Great not more in its theological exclusiveness than in its theological sterility. Cf. Hauck, ii. 607, 663.

² It is uncertain whether he became Master under Charles the Great or not. The assumption that he succeeded Alcuin in 796 seems to lack foundation. Hauck (ii. 605) suggests that his appointment may have been one of the measures by which Louis in effect reversed his father's policy. He was a grammarian of repute but wrote scarcely anything, and perhaps as a teacher did not set his aims very high. (Hauck, *loc. cit.*) He is generally identified with the Scotellus on whom Theodulph of Orleans in *Carm.* 25 poured out

Nor was Charles the Great's desire to provide free education for all who chose to ask it entirely forgotten under his successor. But the want of his vigorous directing hand at the helm was sorely felt: and the narrowing influence of Benedict of Aniane soon appeared in the *Capitulare Monasticum* of 817¹, which forbade monks to train any but *oblato* in their schools. The prohibition might indeed be evaded, perhaps, rather than obeyed, by the separation of the scholars into two classes, *oblato* only being admitted into the inner school, while the external school was open to other students². But, at least so far as the royal wishes were fulfilled, the work of general education fell in the main upon the episcopal schools. And when at the diet of Attigny in 822 the bishops insisted on the necessity for providing at least one school in every diocese, and two or three or even more where the area was exceptionally large, they were obliged to confess that in recent years their own exertions in the matter had been insufficient³. The royal approval was vouch-

the vials of his wrath. Of one Thomas, who is said to have been a fellow teacher (Hauck, *loc. cit.*, n. 4), nothing certain is known.

¹ c. 45, 'Ut schola in monasterio non habeatur, nisi eorum qui *oblato* sunt.' On the effect of this regulation on the character of the instruction received by *oblato*, cf. Specht, *op. cit.*, 33.

² Hauck, ii. 583, n. 4.

³ *Cap.* 174, § 3, 'Scolas autem, de quibus hactenus minus studiosi fuimus quam debueramus, omnino studiosissime emendare cupimus, qualiter omnis homo, sive majoris sive minoris aetatis, qui in hoc nutritur ut in aliquo gradu in ecclesia promoveatur, locum denominatum et magistrum congruum habeat.' These schools moreover were designed only for the training of the clergy, and as they were confined to large centres it was necessary to provide for the maintenance of the scholars during their studies, a duty which the Diet pressed upon the attention of parents and masters: 'parentes tamen vel domini singulorum de victu vel substantia corporali unde subsistant providere studeant, qualiter solacium habeant, ut propter rerum inopiam doctrinae studio non recedant.'

safed¹, but the result seems to have been unsatisfactory. At Worms, in 829, the bishops petitioned for the establishment of at least three royal 'public' schools², and again insisted on the duty of their own order to provide suitable education for the clergy³; but in the troubled years which followed there was little opportunity for the development of public instruction on the lines which Charles the Great had prescribed⁴.

But the influence of Alcuin, above all things a personal influence, is to be found at its highest, not in the subsequent history of the foundations with which he himself was at different times connected, nor even in the efforts made under the successors of Charles the Great to maintain or restore the standard of public education which he had set, but in the lives and writings of his own pupils and friends, and the men to whom they handed down in regular succession

¹ *Cap.* 150, § 6, 'Scolas sane ad filios et ministros ecclesiae instruendos vel edocendos, sicut nobis praeterito tempore ad Attiniacum promisistis et vobis injunximus, in congruis locis, ubi necdum perfectum est, ad multorum utilitatem et profectum a vobis ordinari non neglegantur.'

² *Petitio Episcop.*, 4 (*Cap.* 196): *M.G.H. Leg. Sect. II. Cap.* ii. 37, '...vestrae celsitudini suggerimus ut saltem in tribus congruentissimis imperii vestri locis scholae publicae ex vestra auctoritate fiant, ut labor patris vestri et vester per incuriam, quod absit, labefactando non depereat.' Specht (*op. cit.*, 37 n.) cites parallel passages to prove that *scholae publicae* = schools where, besides theology, the *studia publica*, i.e. the liberal arts, were taught; Masius, on the other hand (*op. cit.*, 188), interprets the phrase to mean schools open to laymen as well as ecclesiastics.

³ *Ibid.* § 39, 'Ut unusquisque episcoporum in scolis habendis... abbie majus studium adhibeat.'

⁴ The last canon (till the thirteenth century) requiring the establishment of schools seems to be c. 10 of the Council of Saponnières in 859: 'ut ubicunque...constituantur scholae publicae.' This canon repeats the complaint of the Council of Valence, four years before, that learning, both sacred and profane, was almost extinct. Cf. Masius, *op. cit.*, 189-193.

the tradition of his teaching. Many of his disciples are known merely by some chance allusion in his letters or poems¹, but there were not a few whose names are to be found inscribed on the roll of honour of medieval scholarship.

Even in his own lifetime the pupils he had trained began to teach: Fredegis² and Witto³ at the Palace School; Witto and Adalbert⁴ at an earlier date at

¹ *Onias*; *Epp.* 210 [155], 251 [187], 276 [284], &c., a comrade of Fredegis: joined with him and Witto in the Dedication of Alcuin's Commentary on Ecclesiastes: *Martin*; *Epp.* 25 [4], and 210 [155], and *Carm.* 7: *Odwin*; *Epp.* 8 [16], and 134 [261]: *Osulf*; mentioned as a backslider in *Vit. Alc.*, died in Italy, where (*Ep.* 188 [245]) he was in attendance on the younger Charles; probably not identical with the wayward disciple of *Ep.* 194 [135], as Werner holds, but possibly the recipient of *Ep.* 195 [136]: *Dodo*; *Ep.* 65 [286], probably = the Cuculus of *Epp.* 66 [287], 226 [167], and 232 [173], and *Carm.* 57: *Daphnis*; *Ep.* 133 [259], to whom is dedicated an exposition of the Song of Solomon, cf. *Carm.* 57: *Raganardus* and *Waldramnus*; known only from an incidental allusion in *Vit. Alc.* 11: *Putul*; Alcuin's comrade at Pincahale, cf. *supra*, p. 63, n. 2. See the list in Hauck, ii. 151, n. 2.

² Fredegis apparently joined Alcuin after 793, being then in deacon's orders, and still young (he was called *puer* in 798, *Ep.* 154 [105]) but well educated, 'gnarus artis, doctus bene' (Theodulph: *Carm.* 25); he became an Archdeacon apparently before 800 (*Ep.* 210 [155]); in 801 with Witto he was summoned to the Palace School. He succeeded Alcuin at Tours, becoming Abbot of St Bertin and St Omer also in 820. The year before he was made Chancellor, and the improvement in the Latin style of the Chancery from that date is ascribed to his influence; he died in 834. Cf. Hauck, ii. 148-9.

³ Witto was sent to Alcuin by Bishop Higbald of Lindisfarne in 793, returning to England after a year, but coming back to the Continent in no long time: in 798 apparently he accompanied Arno to Rome, returning in the summer to Tours, whence in the autumn he went with Adalbert to help in Arno's school at Salzburg. In 800 or early in 801 he went again to Rome, carrying letters from Alcuin at Tours to Charles, but by April he was again at St Martin's, ready to be dispatched to meet the returning Emperor towards the close of the year at Aachen. From that time till his death he seems to have remained at the Court, where Charles bestowed on him the abbacy of some unknown monastery. He probably predeceased Alcuin himself. Cf. Hauck, ii. 146-7.

⁴ The *Magus* of Alcuin's letters, whose knowledge of German made him specially useful at Salzburg.

Salzburg, where his intimate friendship with Archbishop Arno bore much fruit; Rabanus Maurus and his fellow-students at Fulda¹; while at York Eanbald II., at Mainz Riculf², at Trier Ricbod³, at Köln Hildebald⁴, at Salzburg Arno himself⁵, not to speak of Leidrad and Theodulph, of Angilbert and Adalhard and Wala, represented in high places the cause he had at heart.

And after his death his work was taken up in every direction by the scholars who had learnt of him. At St Martin's Fredegis presided over the rise of the new minuscule script⁶, while his quaint treatise *De Tenebris et Nihilo*, the offspring of a discussion at the Palace School, if of little intrinsic value, testified at least to a growing interest in the dialectic art. At Ferrières first Sigulf, the *custos Eboricæ civitatis ecclesiæ*, to whom in memory of years of loving cooperation Alcuin had dedicated his commentary on Genesis⁷: then Adalbert, the *Magus* who worked for years under Arno at Salzburg: and then Adelhric⁸, afterwards Archbishop of Sens—all pupils of the Master himself—kept up the love of learning. It was Adelhric who sent Servatus Lupus to Fulda in 830 to study under Rabanus, and Servatus, returning in 836 to become first instructor in grammar and rhetoric and

¹ Cf. *Ep.* 142 [251], 'Feliciter vive cum pueris tuis,' and cf. *Ep.* 88 [290], if, as seems probable, Hauck is right in holding Rabanus to be the recipient.

² Died 813.

³ 791–804.

⁴ Died 819. He laid the foundation of a library by having certain mss., brought from Rome to Aachen, copied for his cathedral. Specht, *op. cit.*, 335.

⁵ 785–821.

⁶ 804–834.

⁷ He succeeded Alcuin as Abbot, but afterwards resigned and lived as a simple monk under the rule of Adalbert.

⁸ 829–836.

then in 842 Abbot of his old monastery, in his single-minded devotion to learning in the midst of wars and rumours of wars, of poverty and privation, in his wide and critical acquaintance with the classical writers, and in the successful ingenuity with which he secured the loan and evaded the lending of precious manuscripts, anticipated the delights and the enthusiasms of the first scholars of the Renaissance¹. At Metz Amalarius called to mind the manner in which Alcuin had recited the antiphons, and embodied in his own works the Master's explanations of the names Septuagesima, Sexagesima, and Quinquagesima²; and scattered over Western Europe were countless other scholars who had learnt of him in Northumbria, or at Aachen, or at Tours³.

But, after all, it was at Fulda, where the library claimed to contain all the wisdom of the world, that the Alcuinian tradition found its greatest development and its widest sphere of influence. For there Rabanus Maurus⁴, the *primus praeceptor Germaniae*, did for the

¹ Cf. the list of authors with which he displayed acquaintance in Mullinger, *op. cit.*, 168. Livy, Sallust, Caesar, Suetonius, Justinian, Cicero, Quintilian, Virgil, Homer, Terence, Martial, Aulus Gellius, Macrobius, Priscian, Donatus, Servius Capr, besides the usual text-books.

² Cf. Mönchemeier, *Amalar v. Metz*, 16.

³ Cf. Wattenbach, *G. Q.* i. 157, 'Fast alle bedeutenderen Bisthümer und Abteien des Frankenreiches erhielten von hier (St Martin's) aus ihre Vorsteher, und wo in der nächsten Folgezeit von litterarischer Thätigkeit etwas zu melden ist, da können wir mit Sicherheit darauf rechnen, einen Schüler Alcuins zu finden.' Not one of his disciples, the garrulous monk of St Gall believed, failed to become either a holy abbot or a distinguished bishop, except two miller's sons, whose lowly birth disqualified them for so high a post; and even they filled in turn the provostship of the monastery at Bobbio (*Monachus Sangallensis*, i. 9).

⁴ Deacon 801: Priest 814: Master at Fulda under Eigil: Abbot of Fulda 822-842: Archbishop of Mainz 847 to 4 February 856.

Germans what Alcuin had been doing for the whole Frankish Empire, and handed down to his successors the teaching and the method of the Master in the form under which they were destined to influence generations yet unborn.

For there was a difference between the work of Alcuin and the work of Rabanus, which proved what a change in the character of the new learning the death of Charles had brought about.

The writings of Rabanus, though far more voluminous than Alcuin's, ran on very much the same lines. The composition of verses, uninspired and uninspiring, the compilation of school manuals or works of reference¹, the construction of biblical commentaries by the laborious adaptation of the work of others, absorbed all the energy which might have been expended in original work.

Rabanus indeed displayed a greater learning than Alcuin; his patristic reading was wider, and, if like him he had but a slight acquaintance with Greek, in his knowledge of the Bible, of ecclesiastical literature, and of canon law he was in Germany unequalled and in the whole Frankish Empire unexcelled².

And the zeal with which he vindicated the study of the liberal arts was at least as great as Alcuin's³, though for him still the science of theology was the

¹ The *De Universo*, a species of encyclopaedia based on Isidore of Seville, and the treatise *De Institutione Clericorum* are the most important of his works. The latter is typical of the age both in the width of its subject-matter and in the restriction of the audience to which it was addressed.

² Hauck, ii. 628.

³ Cf. *Ep.* 36 (the dedication of the *De Universo* to Haymo): *M. G. H. Epp.* v. 470. His definition of grammar was wider than Alcuin's, including 'the science of interpreting the poets and historians.'

ultimate object of all learning; he even went beyond him in his defence of dialectic¹ and he desired the clergy to have at least some understanding of classical history and philosophy². The information he imparted was more varied, his commentaries more voluminous, the result rather of a combination of several earlier authorities than of the condensation of one. And yet there was something wanting. The binding force of tradition had become even stronger, the distaste for original inquiry even more intense. The writings of the Fathers on which the commentaries were based were no longer paraphrased but literally reproduced; the share of the compiler in the composition designedly, almost ostentatiously, reduced to the smallest possible proportions. The *De Fide S. Trinitatis* of Alcuin had no counterpart in the works of Rabanus—the narrowing circle of students demanded indeed a larger store of information, but eschewed dogmatic discussion and abhorred inquiry³.

The change which Charles' death had wrought has been well described by a recent writer. Learned activities were not suspended, nor was the field of knowledge curtailed; but the laity ceased to take an active part in letters, learning became almost entirely professional, and the clergy, while caring little for

¹ Repeating Alcuin's definition he added: 'Haec ergo est disciplina disciplinarum, haec docet docere, scit scire sola, et scientes facere non solum vult sed etiam potest. Quapropter oportet clericos hanc artem nobilissimam scire'; but the object was still, as with Alcuin, not so much to ascertain truth as to defend the truth already ascertained through revelation.

² He quoted Plato as 'of great authority' on the harmonies and proportions observed in creation. West, *op. cit.*, 144.

³ Hauck, ii. 632. Cf. *ibid.* 636, 'Raban überlieferte nicht mehr Gedankenentwickelungen sondern nur Resultate.'

general culture, produced even in their own peculiar province of theology scarcely any literature worthy of the name. Classical studies were suspected; instead of paraphrasing the books of earlier writers men transcribed their words; chronicles took on a meagre form; in biography the historical sense was choked by the thirst for the miraculous¹.

Yet the Alcuinian tradition was not dead.

Through Rabanus it passed to the two-and-twenty houses which at his death looked up to Fulda as their head. Walafrid Strabo, Rabanus' own pupil and successor in the Mastership of the monastic school, became in time Abbot of Reichenau, and in his *Glossa Ordinaria*, the standard manual of exegesis in Western Europe for centuries to come, faithfully obeyed the time-honoured precept that commentaries should be collected rather than composed; at Fulda Rudolph continued, though with narrowed interests, the annals that Einhard had begun, and Otfrid of Weissenberg wrote his *Krist*, a metrical harmony of the Gospels in the Old High German tongue, one of the few products of that interest in the vernacular which some scholars of the ninth century displayed²; at Hirschau Abbot Liutbert and the monk Ruthard, at St Gall Abbot Hartmot and the monk Warembert, at Ellwangen Abbot Ermenrich (whose easy treatment in forty pages of dogma and ethics, liturgiology and exegesis, ecclesiastical discipline and pastoral work,

¹ Hauck, 667.

² Servatus Lupus is said to have gone to Fulda to learn German, and he himself sent his nephew and others to Prüm for the like purpose, alleging that of that language *nemo nisi nimis tardus* could be ignorant. The study of the vernacular found a home also at Reichenau and St Gall Cf. Hauck, ii. 619.

psychology and mythology, grammar, rhetoric, metric, and dialectic is characteristic of the sterility of German culture in the latter half of the ninth century¹) cherished the traditions of learning which they had imbibed at Fulda.

Historians have long ceased to trace a dubious pedigree for the University of Paris through Rheims and Fulda to the Palace School at Aachen. Yet it remains true that to the verge of the Intellectual Revival of the eleventh and twelfth centuries the Alcuinian tradition lingered on, passing from scholar to scholar, and illuminating now in this quarter and now in that the prevailing darkness. Heric of Auxerre learnt of Rabanus at Fulda and of Servatus Lupus at Ferrières; and he in turn was the Master of Remigius (another pupil of Servatus Lupus) who succeeded him at Auxerre, and in after years taught first at Rheims, where Archbishop Fulk engaged him to cooperate with Hucbald in restoring the reputation of the Cathedral School, and then at Paris, where he wrote his famous commentary on Martianus Capella. And the name of his most renowned pupil, Odo of Cluny, marked the transition from the age of Alcuin to the age of the Cluniac Revival. Then came the German literary movement under the Ottos, in which Gerbert, with his Spanish learning, played so great a part; and in the eleventh century the beginnings of what has come to be called the Twelfth Century Renaissance.

The Carolingian Revival, in that generous shape which it assumed in the mind of Charles the Great

¹ *Ermenrici Epistola*, ed. Duemmler, *M.G.H. Epp.* v. 554-579. Cf. Hauck, ii. 661, and Ebert, *op. cit.*, ii. 179-185.

himself, was of brief duration. It died away in darkness; learning ceased to be general, organised, liberal, and became clerical, spasmodic, professional. But the darkness which thus closed in upon the movement was never so deep as in the ages which preceded it¹. The creative impulse was soon exhausted, but the conservative impulse still endured. Men ceased to attempt to add to the sum of knowledge, but they were careful to preserve the accumulated wisdom of the past. And thus, when the light began again to pierce through the storm clouds of feudal strife and anarchy, the foundations laid in the eighth century were still there, ready to receive the weight of the higher learning which the scholars of the new revival should build up².

In the movement which, heralded by the speculations of John the Scot, burst into full flower in the classroom of Abelard, and bore its fruit in the rise of Scholasticism and the medieval Universities, there was indeed much that marked an advance beyond the standpoint of Alcuin. Its leaders were possessed by wider ambitions—they moved with a greater freedom of thought and word. No longer content merely to recover and record the wisdom of their forefathers, they sought to follow in their footsteps and to emulate their success. The excessive reverence for authority

¹ Cf. Monod, *op. cit.*, 58 (referring to the period 850–1000 A.D.): ‘On ne retrouvera plus alors cette connaissance solide d’antiquité, cette habileté dans le métrique, ce purisme grammatical qui distinguent les élèves d’Alcuin, mais l’œuvre de Charlemagne et des maîtres qui l’ont inspiré et aidé a jeté des racines trop profondes pour pouvoir être extirpées. Dès que la calme se rétablit, que le ciel se montre plus clément, elles donnent naissance à des vigoureux rejetons. Si les lettres cessent, par suite des malheurs des temps, d’être cultivées sur un point elles reflorissent sur un autre.’

² Cf. Wattenbach, *G. Q.*, i. 159.

which had characterised Alcuin—which had made Rabanus Maurus pass over silently in St Augustine what in Gottschalk he condemned¹—was replaced in Abelard by a tendency to undervalue it, if not to ignore it altogether. Instead of Commentaries so closely following the Fathers that they were little more than mosaics of patristic quotations, there appeared that silent but eloquent commentary on patristic fallibility, the *Sic et Non*.

And the future lay with the new School. In spite of Sens and Soissons, the method of Abelard, through the *Decretum* of Gratian and the *Sententie* of Peter Lombard, became the authorised method of the Church. But the triumph of the movement which he led, the intellectual revival of the twelfth century, would have been impossible but for the earlier revival of the eighth. The work of recovery and conservation was an essential preliminary to the work of discovery and advance. The foundation had to be laid before the building itself could be begun.

And it was just with this humbler yet more enduring aspect of the Carolingian revival that Alcuin was specially identified. There can be no doubt, in view—or, perhaps it may be said, in spite—of the extravagant humility of his habitual language, that he was really penetrated through and through with a deep sense of inferiority in himself and in his age to the ages which had passed. His supreme ambition was so to preserve and transmit the wisdom of his greater predecessors that it might descend with value undiminished as the precious heritage of future gene-

¹ Cf. Hauck, ii. 641.

rations. His gaze was habitually turned backward, and in his ordinary moods perhaps he looked for little progress in the years to come¹. But, could he have foreseen the development which actually took place, he would have rejoiced above all to know that his patient and loyal and unpretentious labours had helped to make it possible that, by the achievements of future scholars, his own should be immeasurably surpassed².

¹ The subdued cheerfulness which appears in *Ep.* 170 [110] (to Charles), 'si, plurimis inclitum vestrae intentionis studium sequentibus, forsan Athenae nova (*sic*) perficeretur in Francia, immo multo excellentior,' is rare in his letters.

² His influence on later ages is discussed by Monnier, pp. 251-255, Mullinger, pp. 191-2, and West, pp. 165-179.

CHAPTER X.

ALCUIN'S WORK : (iii) LITURGICAL AND BIBLICAL.

THE Roman Liturgy, says a writer already quoted, was 'the class-book of the barbaric races,' and from the time of Gregory the Great onwards 'grammar and the *cantus*, the Latin tongue and the Roman music,' took 'their places side by side as the two indispensables of education¹.' It is therefore natural that Alcuin, who revolutionised the educational system of the Frankish Church, should have left his mark also on the Frankish Liturgy.

A reform of that liturgy which would bring it into a closer connexion with the Roman model was indeed an integral part of the scheme which Charles had planned and which it was Alcuin's task to carry out. The 'ultramontane' tendencies which, according to M. Duchesne², owed their existence on the Continent to the Anglo-Saxon missionary Boniface, found with the early Carolingians, it is true, only a very guarded acceptance. Neither Pippin nor Charles the Great had the least intention of renouncing a single prerogative in favour of the Papacy. But the events which drew the

¹ Drane, *op. cit.*, 61.

² *Christian Worship*, 100.

political bonds that united Rome and Aachen ever closer and closer, and made the Pope at last the chief bishop of the Frankish realm, could not fail to affect in like manner the relations between the Papacy and the Frankish Church. Moreover, though in earlier days no such need had been felt, the love of order, organisation, and uniformity which inspired both kings, and Charles' inflexible determination to make his kingdom in every respect the model of Western Europe, rendered it essential to set up some standard in liturgical matters to which all the Churches in the realm should be required to conform. Such a standard could scarcely be furnished by the Frankish Church, with its 'acephalous episcopate'¹ and numberless local 'uses'—Gallican and Romano-Gallican in ever-varying proportions—no one of which, in the absence of any recognised primacy, could claim superior authority to any other. Much less, in an age when custom and tradition were all-powerful, could a standard be improvised. And so—since some model was essential, and no other could be found—the Roman 'use,' stamped with the prestige of the Apostolic See, whose authority in matters ecclesiastical Charles acknowledged even when he claimed to dictate its decrees, naturally became the model of the Frankish Church.

In the royal chapel at Aachen, accordingly—and the royal chapel was meant to set the law for all the king's dominions—the Roman 'use' was established *ob unitatem apostolicæ sedis et sanctæ Dei ecclesiæ pacificam concordiam*².

¹ *Christian Worship*, 103.

² *Cap.* 22. 80.

But the process was gradual. Pippin led the way with the introduction of the Roman chant, receiving from the Pope himself a copy of the *Liber Responsalis*, containing the music for the Hours as it was performed at Rome¹. The early efforts of Frankish voices to master the intricacies of the chant were not always crowned with immediate success. Sometimes lookers on were moved to mocking gibes, and compared the sounds they heard to the crashing and creaking of heavy wagons on a stony road². But perseverance brought its own reward. Pippin was ably seconded at Metz by Archbishop Chrodegang; the School of Rouen, first under Simeon of the Roman *schola cantorum*, and then, when he was recalled by Pope Paul I. to assume the direction of his old school, under some monks who had been to learn of him at Rome, acquired a high reputation; and in later years these famous singing schools found rivals at Soissons, Orleans, and Lyons.

The accession of Charles, here as in other cases, inaugurated a fresh development of a movement already in operation³. The tentative opportunism of Pippin

¹ *Cod. Carol.* 24 (*M.G.H. Epp.* iii.).

² Joannes Diaconus, *Vita S. Gregorii Magni*, ii. 7, ap. Migne, *Patr. Lat.* lxxv. 91. Cf. *Annales Laurissenses*, 787. (*M. G. H. Scriptorum* T. i., ed. Pertz, 171.)

³ M. Duchesne indeed is inclined to credit Pippin with a larger share in the reform than is generally allowed to him. 'It was not therefore Charlemagne...but Pippin the Short who abolished the Gallican liturgy.' But the passage cited in support of this assertion (*Cap.* 22, c. 80) seems to apply only to the *cantus Romanus*, and the silence of the *Libri Carolini* as to any change under Pippin except in this respect should perhaps carry more weight than M. Duchesne would allow to it. Cf. Mönchemeier (*op. cit.*, 136): 'Als unter der Regierung Pippins die Einführung des römischen Ritus Gesetz worden war, richtete sich die Aufmerksamkeit in der ersten Zeit fast ausschliesslich auf den Gesang.' It is not of course contended that Charles introduced a liturgy hitherto entirely unknown in his kingdom; Hauck (ii. 253) shows that Roman Sacramentaries were to

gave place to the deliberate prosecution of a systematic and consistent policy. The Frankish and the Roman Churches, one in faith and doctrine, should no longer be separated by differences, however slight, of formulary or ritual¹. Not only the Roman Chant but the Roman Calendar, the Roman Sacramentary, the Roman form of Baptism, even the type of shoe worn in the sacred services by the Roman clergy², should be adopted in all the churches of Charles' kingdom. His policy was proclaimed in countless Capitularies and synodical decrees. But Capitularies and decrees would have been worth but little if they had stood alone. The Roman use could not be substituted for the Gallican by a mere command. To secure its adoption it was not enough even to multiply copies of the Roman books. The Gallican or Romano-Gallican rite was in possession. An absolute and arbitrary rejection of the old service books was impossible. What was needed was a revision which would bring them into harmony with the Roman calendar and ritual; and it would require some diplomacy, perhaps even some readiness to concede points of minor importance, to effect the change. The task of revision demanded the sympathetic scholarship of one who would at once approve the principle of the reform and recognise its difficulties, which difficulties moreover he must be skilled to

be found here and there in the earliest years of his reign; but, as Mönchemeier says (*op. cit.*, 187): 'Karl der Grosse gab der Reform den eigentlich umfassenden und allgemeinen Charakter.'

¹ *Lrb. Carol.*, i. 6, 'nec sejungeret officiorum varia celebratio quas conjunxerat unice fidei pia devotio.'

² *Cap.* 23, § 23, 'Ut...secundum morem Romanum baptizent. § 24. De calciamentis secundum Romanum usum.' Cf. *Conc. Mog.* (813) c. 4, 'Sacramenta...baptismatis volumus ut...in singulis parochiis secundum Romanum ordinem inter nos celebrentur.'

minimise if he could not altogether remove them. Such a man, fortunately, Charles had ready to his hand. Every circumstance of birth, of training, and of temperament fitted Alcuin, here as in other spheres, to become the willing and effective interpreter of his desires. In the Anglo-Saxon as in the Frankish Church there was a twofold liturgical tradition. At Canterbury indeed the broad-minded suggestion of Gregory the Great that Augustine should compile a liturgy for the new Church, in a spirit of comprehensive eclecticism, from the best elements of the Roman and Gallican uses indifferently¹, seems to have produced but little effect, and in all essential points the Roman influence reigned supreme². But the Irish

¹ 'Cum una sit fides, sunt ecclesiarum diversae consuetudines, et altera consuetudo missarum in sancta Romana ecclesia, atque altera in Galliarum tenetur.'—'Noverit fraternitas tua Romanae ecclesiae consuetudinem, in qua se meminit nutritam. Sed mihi placet, sive in Romana, sive in Galliarum, seu in qualibet ecclesia, aliquid invenisti quod plus omnipotenti Deo possit placere, sollicite eligas, et in Anglorum ecclesia quae adhuc ad fidem nova est, institutione praecipua, quae de multis ecclesiis colligere potuisti, infundas. Non enim pro locis res, sed pro bonis rebus loca amanda sunt. Ex singulis ergo quibusque ecclesiis, quae pia, quae religiosa, quae recta sunt elige, et haec, quasi in fasciculum collecta, apud Anglorum mentes in consuetudinem deponere.' Haddan and Stubbs, iii. 19. That the British Church was not in Augustine's mind when he put the question seems certain from his omission of all reference to the peculiar characteristics of British Christianity in the mode of administering Baptism and reckoning Easter. (Cf. Wilson, *Some Liturgical Questions*, 243.) From the Roman and Gallican Churches he had received baptism and episcopal ordination respectively.

² There is no evidence for the creation of a special rite; Wilson, *op. cit.*, 239. Even if it is true that the 'Rogations' or Processional Litanies before Ascension Day and the Gallican *Benedictio Populi* owed their early appearance in the English liturgy to Augustine (Bright, *op. cit.*, 103, and references there given), the substantial purity of the Roman tradition remains unimpaired. That Roman Service Books were sent to England by the Pope appears from two passages in the *Dialogus Ecclesiasticae Institutionis* of Egbert of York (Haddan and Stubbs, iii. 411-2): (§ De primo Jejunio) 'Ut

missionaries who converted Northumbria in the seventh century brought with them the Irish use—the Gallican Liturgy, that is to say, as modified by Irish, possibly also by British¹, influences. And so two traditions, Roman and Celtic, the tradition of Canterbury and the tradition of Iona, met in the Anglo-Saxon Church. ‘Hence,’ says M. Duchesne², ‘a conflict as to use between the Irish missions from Lindisfarne and the somewhat inactive mission in Kent, which was always Roman in principle, even if its members were not all Roman.’

The collision resulted in a compromise. The earliest surviving Anglo-Saxon books are full of Gallicanisms³: just as the Stowe Missal, though it contains the Roman Canon, betrays at every turn its Celtic origin.

noster didascalus beatus Gregorius in suo antiphonario et missali libro per paedagogum nostrum beatum Augustinum transmisit ordinatum et rescriptum,’ and again (§ De Secundo Jejunio) ‘Hoc...idem... Gregorius, per prae-fatum legatum, in Antiphonario suo et Missali... celebrandum destinant. Quod non solum nostra testantur antiphonaria sed et ipsa quae cum missalibus suis conspeximus apud apostolorum Petri et Pauli limina,’ i.e. at Canterbury, according to Rule (*Missal of St Augustine's, Canterbury*, p. x); but Bishop (*Dublin Review*, cxv., 249) believes it to refer to Rome.

¹ Browne, *Church before St Augustine*, 149. Tradition declared that the ‘Second Order of Saints,’ so closely connected with the Irish missionaries in England, brought from Wales a ritual for the Mass differing from the ritual observed by the First Order. In the Anglo-Saxon Ordination Service at least the anointing of the hands, which Gildas regarded as a rite peculiar to the British Church, suggests an ultimately British origin, shared perhaps by other features in the ordination ceremony not to be found in either the Roman or the Gallican use. Through Bishop Felix, again—an Irish monk, perhaps, of Luxeuil, sent to East Anglia by Honorius in 631—the liturgy of the Gallican Church, to which he owed his ordination, may have gained a footing on English soil. Cf. Bright, *op. cit.*, 167. Swete, *Services and Service-Books*, 11.

² *Op. cit.*, 99.

³ *Ibid. ib.*, cf. Wilson, *op. cit.*, 243; but it is uncertain how far they were influenced by the Carolingian revision.

Perhaps the credit of the compromise is due to Theodore of Tarsus, a man discreet as well as strong, and ready to make concessions to the Celtic tradition in accordance with the liberal policy laid down by Gregory the Great¹.

But purists of the Roman school were never wanting, and in England as in Gaul they won their earliest victories in the sphere of music. In the dark days after the flight of Paulinus, James the Deacon, surnamed 'the Chanter' from his skill in church music, manfully upheld the tradition of Canterbury in Northumbria in the face of Celtic rivalry as well as pagan persecution. In the eyes of Wilfrid it seems to have been almost as important 'to sing responsively, according to the custom of the primitive Church,' as to be orthodox on the points of Easter and the tonsure, or to observe the Benedictine rule². He ordained Putta, afterwards Bishop of Rochester, who travelled about Mercia *ad docenda ecclesiae carmina*³, while Maban the Chanter taught at Hexham under Acca, and John the Precentor came to Wearmouth, sent by the Pope at Biscop's instance to teach the Roman Chant to all who cared to learn.

Their labours were not in vain. In 747 at the Council of Cloveshoo the Church of the Southern Province, as a corporate body, formally adopted the Roman use as its standard, not only for the chant but for every part of the Liturgy⁴.

¹ Duchesne, *loc. cit.*

² Cf. Bright, *op. cit.*, 269, 442.

³ Bede, *Hist. Eccles.*, iv, 12.

⁴ Cf. c. 13, 'Ut uno eodemque modo Dominicæ dispensationis in carne sacrosanctæ festivitates, in omnibus ad eas rite competentibus rebus, id est, in Baptismi officio, in Missarum celebratione, in

But the Celtic tradition—if weakened—was not destroyed. Alcuin's letters show that in the Northern Province at least a mixed practice still existed even at the end of the century. Writing in 796 to Eanbald, just elected to the See of York, and insisting on the performance of the Offices with all due dignity, he urged the clergy of Northumbria not to despise the Roman *ordines*, but rather to adopt them, 'imitating to the best of their ability the head of the Churches of Christ, and earning thereby the eternal blessing of the Prince of the Apostles¹.' In a later letter he returned to the charge, begging the Archbishop to set an example to his clergy in the matter, and anticipating the objection that few could be found to help by reminding him that his reward would be proportioned to his labour². And this second letter, in another passage,

Cantilenae modo, celebrantur juxta exemplar videlicet quod scriptum de Romana habemus Ecclesia. Itemque ut per gyrum totius anni natalitia sanctorum uno eodemque die, juxta martyrologium ejusdem Romanae Ecclesiae, cum sua sibi convenienti psalmodio seu cantilena venerentur.' c. 15, 'Ut septem canonicae orationum...horae...cum psalmodio et cantilena...observantur...nihilque quod communis usus non admittit...sed tantum quod ex sacrarum Scripturarum auctoritate descendit, et quod Romanae Ecclesiae consuetudo permittit, cantent vel legant; quatenus unanimes uno ore laudent Deum.' c. 16, 'Ut Laetaniae...agantur...die septimo kalendarum Maiarum, juxta ritum Romanae Ecclesiae, quae et Laetania major apud eam vocatur,' but 'secundum morem priorum nostrorum,' the Litanies before Ascension Day are retained. c. 18, 'Ammoniatur plebs quatenus legitima universalis Ecclesiae sciat atque observet jejunia, concorditerque universi id faciant; nec ullatenus in ejusmodi discrepent observatione, sed secundum exemplar, quod juxta ritum Romanae Ecclesiae descriptum habemus, studeant celebrare.' (Haddan and Stubbs, iii. 367, 368.) Cf. the general tone of the Synod of Pincanhale, c. iv. (*Id. ibid.*, 450).

¹ *Ep.* 114 [72].

² *Ep.* 226 [167], 'Aliquid voluisssem tuam incepisse auctoritatem Romani ordines in clero tuo; ut exempla a te sumantur, et ecclesiastica officia venerabiliter et laudabiliter vobiscum agantur. Sed 'Rari sunt adjutores' forte dices. Sed major bonae intentionis labor majori summae felicitatis remunerabitur corona.'

throws a welcome light on his attitude towards the general question of liturgical reform. Eanbald apparently had asked him to compile a new Sacramentary for the Church of York, and he declined. He did not understand the request. Had not the Archbishop abundance of Sacramentaries of the Roman type? Had he not also others, of greater size, and representing an older use? What need was there of new books, when the old sufficed¹?

Alcuin, it is plain, was at once eager for the acceptance of the Roman service books in their entirety, and yet willing—when this was secured—to admit the supplementary employment of others. Of his peculiar fitness and perfect readiness to aid the Frankish king in his liturgical reforms there can therefore be no doubt. Unfortunately, however, it is a matter of great difficulty to ascertain exactly what his share in the work was. His own letters throw scarcely any light on the question, and the inquirer must in the main rely on circumstantial evidence or on the vague and possibly untrustworthy testimony of late authorities.

The *Corpus Liturgicum* of Alcuin seems to have comprised a Homiliary, a Lectionary, and a Sacramentary, all designed for use in public worship, a collection of votive masses and a *Liber de Psalmorum usu* for monks, a 'Breviary' for pious laymen, and a short treatise, in the form of a letter, on the Baptismal

¹ 'De ordinatione et dispositione missalis libelli nescio cur demandasti. Numquid non habes Romano more ordinatos libellos sacramentarios abundanter? Habes quoque et veteris consuetudinis sufficienter sacramentaria majora. Quid opus est nova condere, dum vetera sufficiunt?' 'Gregorian' and 'Gelasian' sacramentaries, according to Bishop, *loc. cit.*, are here referred to.

rite¹. The order in which these compilations appeared can only be inferred from scattered hints, but the Homiliary, it seems probable, was the first.

Both Alcuin and Charles the Great attached supreme importance to the ordinance of preaching. The Capitularies constantly insisted that priests should deliver sermons on all Sundays and holy days², and Alcuin was moved to the highest pitch of indignation by a rumour that certain bishops had forbidden preaching in their dioceses. He hoped, he wrote to Charles, that the story was merely the fabrication of some indolent priests who wished to evade an irksome duty, but if it should prove otherwise he trusted that such a scandal would be roundly dealt with³. But, while preaching was thus a duty obligatory for every priest, it was not demanded that he should always write his own sermons⁴. A Latin homily, translated into the vulgar tongue for the benefit of the people, would often answer every purpose⁵. And thus the compilation of a Homiliary, or collection of such Latin homilies,

¹ Morin, *L'homélaire d'Alcuin retrouvé*.

² E.g. *Cap.* 22, c. 61, 'Primo omnium ut fides catholica diligenter legatur et omni populo praedicetur.' *Cap.* 36, c. 6, 'Omnibus festis et dominicis diebus unusquisque sacerdos evangelium praedicet.' *Cap.* 64, c. 6, 'Ut unusquisque...praedicare studeat.' ³ *Ep.* 136 [239].

⁴ Passages in the Capitularies of Theodulph of Orleans, cited by Hauck (ii. 242, n. 3), are of interest in this connexion; the Bishop had to allow for lack of learning in his clergy. *Cap.* i. 28, 'Qui scripturas scit, praedicet scripturas, qui vero nescit, saltem hoc quod notissimum est, plebibus dicat, ut declinent a malo &c.' *Cap.* ii., 'Sacerdos ad plebem sermonem praedicationis faciat, primum admonens plebem, ut invicem se diligant &c. Deinde, si Dominus dat intellectum, hoc quod sacerdos veraciter intelligit de evangelio, de epistola S. Pauli, quantum potest, dicat illis.'

⁵ Hauck, ii. 245. Cf. *Ep.* 136, cited above. 'Quare in ecclesiis ubique ab omni ordine clericorum omeliae leguntur? Quid est omelia nisi praedicatio? Mirum est quod legere licet et interpretari non licet, ut ab omnibus intellegatur!'

furthered the work of the preacher by providing him with a treasury of suitable discourses. Alcuin, according to the express assertion of his biographer, formed such a collection, and thus did his part in the work of promoting the preaching of the Gospel¹.

The so-called 'Homiliary of Alcuin,' indeed, which was printed under his name in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, is in reality the work of Paulus Diaconus—a series of *verbatim* excerpts from the Fathers intended for the use of the clergy in the night Offices—which received the royal *imprimatur* in a famous Capitulary². Nor is it certain that any copy of the genuine Alcuinian Homiliary survives. But recent researches have brought to light a manuscript of the twelfth century which has on the back of the last leaf, in a fifteenth century hand, the inscription: *Omilie Alcuini de dominicis per anni circulum et de quibusdam aliis diebus*³. The calendar followed seems to show that the work cannot have been written after Alcuin's time⁴; and, though the manuscript is not divided, in accordance with the biographer's account, into two volumes, there is a conspicuous break after the Homily for the Feast of the Ascension, where in the eighth and ninth centuries the division of the calendar was usually made, and there alone—a blank

¹ *Vit. Alc.*, 21, 'Collegit multis de patrum operibus homeliarum duo volumina.'

² *Cap.* 30. It naturally came to be used also as a storehouse for preachers. Hauck, ii. 247.

³ Morin, *op. cit.*

⁴ The position of the *Dormitio* or *Depositio* of the Virgin Mary in January, between the Offices for Epiphany and for the Purification (the only other feast in her honour), as in the old Gallican books before the Carolingian reform, is considered by Dom Morin as decisive on this point. *Ibid.* 493.

space at this point seeming to indicate the spot where the heading of the second volume originally stood. And the writer's close acquaintance with the Fathers, especially with Jerome, Augustine, Gregory, and, above all, Bede; his anxiety to speak *canonice* and to support his assertions by the *auctoritas sanctorum patrum canonicorum*; and his fondness for arithmetical subtleties, all combine to support the theory that the ascription of the work to Alcuin is correct, even though, in the present state of the evidence, it may be safest to return an open verdict. Whoever the author was, he apparently designed his Homiliary more directly for preaching purposes than did Paulus; for his homilies, unlike Paulus' patristic excerpts, took the form of continuous discourses.

The second of the liturgical works ascribed to him, the *Comes ab Albino ex Caroli imp. praecepto emendatus*, first printed by Tommasi in 1691, is a catalogue of the Epistles to be read at Mass throughout the year. Before his time liturgical information of the kind here given was often conveyed merely by marginal notes in the various Books of the Bible. An advance was marked by the invention of the *Comes* and the *Capitulare Evangeliorum*, which contained catalogues of the Epistles and the Gospels respectively for the entire year. At first only the opening and concluding words of each portion of Scripture were given; later¹ the full text was provided; and the compilation as a whole was then known as a *Plenarium*,

¹ Occasionally as early as the seventh century, and frequently in the ninth.

its component parts being the 'Lectionary,' 'Apostolus' or 'Apostolicus,' and the 'Evangelary,' respectively¹.

The *Comes Albini*, in its present form, contains two hundred and forty-two Epistles for Sundays, Feasts, and Holy-days, followed by a 'preface' introducing additional Epistles for week-days and vigils². The writer of the Preface states that he has copied all that precedes it from the manuscript 'which, as was well known, the most learned Albinus, at the command of Charles, wisest of Emperors, rectified and amended³'; and to these he has added certain 'lections' appointed by other learned men for the Vigils of Easter, the week-days, and other days in the ecclesiastical year, which Alcuin, strictly confining himself to the limits of the Gregorian Sacramentary, omitted in his compilation. He knows, he adds, that many desire to find them indicated, and by including them he is therefore satisfying a widespread want; but if any do not approve of them, they have simply, without challenging the judgment of others, to pass them over. Here the double purpose of Alcuin's liturgical labours, the elimination of error and the attainment of conformity to the Roman usage, stands revealed; but perhaps the chief value of the *Hunc Codicem*, for so the preface from its opening words is often called, lies in the light

¹ Thalhofer, *Handbuch d. kath. Liturgik*, I. i. 43. No 'Evangelary' is known to have been compiled by Alcuin, though a catalogue of the library at St Riquier in the ninth century includes a 'lectionarius plenarius a supradicto Albino ordinatus.' Becker, *Catalogi bibliothecarum antiqui*, 28.

² Ranke, *Perikopensystem*, 154-161: the 'Comes' is printed in the appendix: iv—xxvi.

³ He explains that the corruption of the text necessitated Alcuin's revision, and urges future copyists to copy with care.

it throws on the earlier preface, the *Huc usque*, which so evidently served as its model.

At some date between the years 784 and 791. Charles the Great received from Pope Hadrian, by his own request, a Gregorian Sacramentary, uninterpolated, which embodied the tradition of the Roman Church¹. The accompanying letter does not show what Hadrian supposed to be the motive of the king's request. Throughout the movement for conformity to Rome it was perhaps the Frankish sovereigns rather than the Popes who took the initiative. 'The intervention of Rome in the reformation of the liturgy was neither spontaneous nor very active. The Popes contented themselves with sending copies of their liturgical books without troubling themselves as to the use which might be made of them².'

There is no doubt however that Charles' purpose was to introduce the Sacramentary into his own Chapel, and to make it the basis of his liturgical reforms. It was, therefore, indubitably the Sacramentary then in general use at Rome that he received, not a book used by the Pope alone, nor 'an antiquarian specimen,' a liturgical curiosity representing an obsolete ritual, neither of which would have been of any use to him in his scheme for setting up the current use of Rome

¹ *Cod. Carol.* 89. *M.G.H. Epp.* iii. 626, 'De sacramentario vero a sancto disposito predecessori nostro, deiflvo Gregorio papa: immixtum vobis mitteremus, jam pridem Paulus grammaticus a nobis eum pro vobis petente secundum sanctae nostrae ecclesiae traditionem, per Johannem...emisimus....'

² Duchesne, *op. cit.*, 104. The *Libri Carolini* however (i. 6) mention papal exhortations as incentives to the exertions of Charles: 'reverentissimi papae Adriani salutaribus exhortationibus parere nitentes.'

as the standard for the Frankish Church at large¹. Yet apparently not a single copy of the book, as it left Hadrian's hands, now remains².

Some of the Gregorian Sacramentaries now known bear Gregory's name on their title-pages; others are called merely 'Roman'; but, whatever slight variations may be found in minor and technical details, they are to all intents and purposes identical—the same order of prayers, the same collection of texts, virtually, reappearing in each. 'In a word, one, and only one, edition of Pope Hadrian's *Gregorianum* now exists: an edition enriched with additional matter and adapted to usages widely prevalent in the Frankish kingdom; and in this form only was the *Gregorianum* naturalised among the Frankish clergy and people³.'

The manuscripts embodying the enlarged Sacra-

¹ The view taken by Dom Bäumer (*Das sogenannte Sacramentarium Gelasianum*), by Mr Edmund Bishop (*The Earliest Roman Massbook*), and by Dr Ebner (*Quellen und Forschungen*, pp. 386–7: in Thalhofer's *Handbuch* i. i. 73 he took a different view), is here accepted. Mönchmeier (*op. cit.*, 127) follows Duchesne in maintaining the existence of two Sacramentaries in simultaneous use at Rome, one Gregorian, the other Gelasian. The theory is refuted by Bishop, Probst (*Die ältesten Römischen Sacramentarien*), Bäumer, and Ebner. The assumption that the Roman clergy before the Carolingian revision had recourse to a supplementary collection of offices, because the Gregorian Sacramentary did not contain the masses necessary for daily use, involves, as has been pointed out, the further assumption that Hadrian, for no conceivable reason, withheld the supplement when he sent the Sacramentary to Aachen, and that Charles, still more unaccountably, not only failed to ask for it but deliberately substituted for it a compilation of his own, though his main object was to secure an exact correspondence between the use of his own realm and the use of Rome. The view that the book sent by Hadrian was, as Bäumer (251, n. 2) says, 'ein antiquarisches Stück,' no longer in use at Rome, is maintained by Probst.

² Ebner, *Quellen*, etc., 381. Even the oldest (*MS. Lat. Bib. Nat.* 2292) contains slight contemporary additions, and to all other known mss. the following remarks apply.

³ Bäumer, tr. by Bishop, *op. cit.*, 257.

mentary may be divided into three classes. In the first the original matter is separated from the supplement by a 'preface,' after which there is often placed a list of the additions which follow. In the second the original matter and the supplement are still kept separate, but the preface and the list of additions have disappeared. In the third and largest, the original and the supplementary matter are blended. It is with the first and oldest of these three classes that the name of Alcuin is connected. For the 'preface' which there separates the two parts of the work, and which from its opening words is known as the *Huc usque*, would seem to be of his composition and to describe exactly the treatment to which he subjected the Sacramentary¹. What precedes the Preface, the writer explains, with the exception of a few forms distinguished by a special mark, represents the correct text of the Gregorian Sacramentary, which he has carefully restored. But there are certain other forms, needful for the Church's use, which Gregory omitted as having been already put forth by other writers, and these he himself had been at the pains to collect, amend, and arrange, that his readers may possess within the compass of a single manuscript all that, in his opinion, is necessary for the times, though more is to be found in other Sacramentaries. The Preface, from its position, will distinguish Gregory's compilation from the work of other Fathers, and thus, while those to whom the additional matter is welcome may receive it with devout thanksgiving, those who deem it superfluous may simply

¹ The text is given under the name of Abbot Grimwald in Pamelius, *Missale SS. Patrum Latinorum*, tom. ii. pp. 388-390: it is also printed, with slight variations, in Probst, *op. cit.*, pp. 366-368.

ignore its presence and employ only the pure *Gregorianum*; but whoever rejects that will do so at his peril. Nothing has been included which is not taken from the writings of the most learned and approved authorities. At the end will be found certain 'prefaces,' which he hopes only those will sing who both love and understand them, together with episcopal benedictions of the people, and the forms for the ordination of the inferior clergy which are not contained in the *Gregorianum*. He ends by begging the prayers of all who use his work, and urging them to be as careful in copying as he has been in compiling it.

The matter thus introduced consists of Masses for six Sundays after Epiphany and twenty-four after Whitsuntide, a Mass for Ash Wednesday, and the Prefaces and Benedictions mentioned in the text. Much of this material is Gelasian; the Benedictions are Gallican, the very same, in fact, that Pope Zacharias condemned in his correspondence with Boniface¹.

The author of the *Huc usque* thus announced a critical edition of the *Gregorianum*, based no doubt on a collation of manuscripts, with a supplement of Gallican Masses and other forms derived from various sources, *ex multis multa*, containing 'all things that he considered necessary for his time.' The full use of the first part he declared to be obligatory for all, while the second might be used or not at discretion, having been prepared only in deference to the express desire of many to find in the book 'these so excellent and varied observances.'

In all the earlier manuscripts the preface is anonym-

¹ *M.G.H. Epp.* iii. 371.

ous. Not only the deprecating and humble tone of the writer, however, his 'nervous anxiety to be beforehand with friction, to lessen the risk of conflict¹,' but his twofold ambition, to secure a pure text and to conform to the usages of Rome, point straight to Alcuin, the only scholar of that day, perhaps, who both could and would have done the work. And the hypothesis that he was the author is confirmed both by the mention in a ninth century inventory of the books at St Riquier's of a *Missalis Gregorianus et Gelasianus modernis temporibus ab Albino ordinatus*², and by the unhesitating if not intrinsically valuable testimony of Bernold of Constance, the author of the *Micrologus*³. But, if Alcuin wrote the 'preface,' Charles the Great inspired it. The *Huc usque*, for all its humility, was 'a Carolingian State Paper⁴,' and described an official undertaking. The enforcement of the Gregorian Sacramentary was essential to the success of Charles' ecclesiastical policy, but the far richer Sacramentaries of the Gallican use were endeared to his subjects by custom and association, and could not wisely be ignored. Possibly it was Alcuin who impressed this fact upon the king, for even his enthusiasm for Rome

¹ Bishop, *op. cit.*, 263.

² Becker, *Catalogi*, 28.

³ Bernold (for whose identity cf. Bäumer, *Neues Archiv*, xviii. 431, and Morin, *Revue Bénédictine*, 1895, 395) is more valuable as a corroborating than as an independent witness. c. 60 of the *Micrologus* contains these words: 'Fecit idem Alboinus in sancta ecclesia non contemnendum opus, nam Gregorianas orationes in libris sacramentorum collegisse asseritur, paucis aliis adjectis, quas tamen sub obelo notandas esse indicavit. Deinde alias orationes sive praeationes, vel, si non Gregorianas, ecclesiasticae tamen celebritati idoneas, collegit, sicut prologus testatur quem post Gregorianas orationes, in medio ejusdem libri, locavit.'

⁴ Bishop, *op. cit.*, 226.

was tempered by his judgment. At York, while insisting on the full adoption of the Roman Liturgy, he did not demand the rejection of the older books, which, indeed, he may have considered valuable supplements to the less ample *Gregorianum*, and he declined to compile a new Sacramentary. In France the state of affairs was not exactly similar, for whereas in England there was perhaps but a single non-Gregorian use, that which the Irish missionaries had introduced, in Charles' kingdom the alternative to the Roman usage was not simple but multiform, a medley of local uses with endless variations. But the guiding principle remained the same: the acceptance of the *Gregorianum* as the paramount authority, the relegation of the older forms to a subsidiary position. Only in this case, in view of the variety of those forms, a selection of the best among them became essential, and thus in France the means of securing uniformity was found in the very proceeding which in England Alcuin had rejected as unnecessary, the compilation of a new Sacramentary¹. Hence the work described in the *Huc usque*, comprising the whole of the *Gregorianum* with a select appendix of older materials, for the most part once in use at Rome itself, which had since fallen into disuse there but had maintained themselves in the kingdom of the Franks, not, however, without modification and fusion with still older Gallican elements².

The wisdom of the compromise was proved by its success. 'The Carolingian mass-book, a comparatively

¹ Bishop, *op. cit.*, 264, seems rather unfair to Alcuin in ascribing his acceptance of Charles' policy to his 'strong sense of the value of powerful and paying patronage.'

² Bishop, *op. cit.*, 264.

short time after its introduction, became, and has to this day continued, the great official Prayer-book of the Western Church¹, and the gradual disappearance of the rival liturgies, the pure Roman², the Gallican, and finally the Mozarabic, marked the downfall of 'liturgical particularism³,' and the triumph of the principle of uniformity⁴.

The Homiliary, the Lectionary, and the Sacramentary apparently represent the whole of what may be described as the official liturgical labours of Alcuin. But from time to time, at the instance of his friends, he compiled smaller manuals of prayer and devotion for private or special purposes.

For the monks of Fulda for example, probably in 801 or 802, he drew up a collection of votive masses, intended it would seem rather for monastic than for general use, which has survived as the *Liber Sacramentorum* printed among his liturgical works⁵. To

¹ Bishop, *op. cit.*, 258.

² Cf. Hauck, ii. 256, 'Es geschah nicht so, dass man im fränkischen Reiche zu der ursprünglichen Gestalt des Gregorianums zurückkehrte, sondern so, dass man in Rom die fränkischen Ergänzungen aufnahm: der Gottesdienst in der Aachener Palastkapelle, nicht der im Lateran, ist für die spätere katholische Messe massgebend.'

³ Bishop, *loc. cit.*

⁴ Occasionally a supplement less ample than Alcuin's was preferred. Cf. Ebner, *Quellen und Forschungen*, 387. Arno of Salzburg carried out Charles' policy in his own province. 'Er bestimmte dass überall die gottesdienstlichen Formen der römischen Kirche beobachtet würden.' Hauck, ii. 450.

⁵ Migne, *Patrol. Lat.*, ci. 445-466. He himself described it as follows, when he sent it to Fulda: 'Misi cartulam vobis...ut habeatis singulis diebus quibus preces Deo dirigere cuilibet placeat: quando in honorem sanctae Trinitatis, quando de amore sapientiae, quando de penitentiae lacrimis, quando de caritate perfecta, vel quando de suffragio angelico postulando vel omnium sanctorum cuilibet postulare placet; vel etiam si quis pro peccatis suis, vel pro quolibet amico vivente, vel etiam pro amicis plurimis, vel etiam fratribus de hoc saeculo recedentibus facere velit orationes; vel quando specialiter beatae Mariae

the monastery of St Vedast he sent another collection, apparently derived in the main from the missal used in St Martin's¹. For Charles the Great or his son and namesake he prepared a 'Breviary,' a unique book of devotions for laymen, in which a number of the Psalms were assigned in seven portions, determined by the drift of their content, to the seven days of the week, a collect following every Psalm, and a Litany of Saints for each day, a few hymns, a number of prayers, derived for the most part from the Fathers, and the *Te Deum* and *Benedicite*, completing the work².

genetricis Dei virginis perpetuae deprecari velit intercessionibus; vel etiam sanctissimi patris vestri Bonifacii cantare quis velit, et praesentiam illius piissimam advocare precibus.' (*Ep.* 250 [186].) The mass of St Boniface has disappeared from the *Liber Sacramentorum*, unless it is to be identified with *Missa in veneratione unius Martyris*: on the other hand more than two-thirds of the masses now included in the compilation are not mentioned by Alcuin: hence it has been generally inferred that later editors enlarged the work, an assumption challenged by Hauck (ii. 142, n. 2), who points out that the Sacramentary sent to St Vedast—if drawn from the books in Tours—stands on a different footing from the Fulda codex, and cannot be cited to disprove the genuineness of the complete *Liber Sacramentorum*. Pamelius printed as an appendix to the *Liber* a collection of prayers and benedictions which followed it in the manuscript from which he copied.

¹ 'Missas... aliquas de nostro tuli missale ad cotidiana et ecclesiasticae consuetudinis officia: primo in honore summae Trinitatis; deinde sanctorum intercessionibus deprecandas; etiam et angelorum suffragia postulanda... Postea sanctae Dei genetricis semperque virginis Mariae missam superaddidimus per dies aliquas, si cui placuerit, decantandam; necnon et sancti Vedasti, patris vestri et protectoris nostri, dictavimus missam... Pro peccatis quoque et eleemosinam facientibus adjunximus orationes, quatenus, si quis vel pro suis neglectis vel pro aliorum benefactis offerre voluisset, haberet convenientes intercessionibus suae voluntati. Arbitror vos melius haec omnia vel in sacramentis vestris conscripta vel in consuetudine cotidiana habere. Tamen ne inobediens vestrae essem dilectioni scripsi quod nos in consuetudine habemus et vobis proficuum esse putavi.' (*Ep.* 296 [224], dated by Jaffé and Duemmler c. 796-804.)

² The dedication is addressed to *Carolus Rex*, which might mean Charles the Great till he began to use the imperial title; after which it would mean his son. Duemmler cites the *Vita Alcuini*, c. 15

'Carolus Rex,' too, received a brief account of the reasons for the observance of the canonical hours¹. The treatise *de Psalmorum usu*² was drawn up for monastic use. It classified the Psalms according to their subject-matter, and showed their appropriateness to various moods and circumstances, suitable prayers being interspersed, and more prayers, tabulated under fourteen heads, concluding the work. A brief dissertation on the nature and meaning of the Baptismal rite, in the form of a letter to a priest called Odwin³—which was inserted also in an exhortation addressed, probably about 798, to the monks of Gothia, warning them against

('Ipse...pater Karolum multa erudiens cura...docuit etiam eum...quos psalmos poenitentiae cum letania et orationibus precibusque...decanaret. Quod nosse qui vult, legat libellum ejus ad eundem de ratione orationis'), to prove that the father was intended. But Hauck (ii. 144, n. 2) holds that the tone of the composition points rather to the son, and suggests that the biographer himself was misled by the dedication. Possibly the fact that the name 'David,' by which Alcuin habitually addressed his patron, does not appear, though a play on this and the psalmist David would have been quite in Alcuin's style, favours Hauck's opinion. The work was compiled at Charles' desire: 'quia vos rogastis, ut scriberemus vobis breviarium comatico sermone, qualiter homo laicus, qui adhuc in activa vita consistit, per dinumeratas horas Deo supplicare debeat' (*Ep.* 304 [244]); and it brought the word *breviarium* into liturgical use, though it had little in common with the 'breviaries' of a later date, and remained a unique specimen of its kind. (Cf. Batiffol, *History of the Roman Breviary*, 205.) Hamelin (*Vie d'Alcuin*, 93), however, observes that 'la litanie de dimanche est en partie celle qui est encore en usage.' He adds that the prayers given are not to be found word for word, if they are in substance, in the works of the Fathers to whom they are ascribed.

¹ *Ep.* 304 a, published for the first time in *M.G.H. Epp.* iv.: it seems to be closely connected with the *Breviarium*, and the reason for its composition is given in almost the same words: 'quia vos rogastis &c....supplicare debeat, quantum potui brevitatis causa exponere curavi.'

² Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, ci. 465-508, but cf. Hauck, ii. 144, n. 1, as to the authenticity of the prayers. 'Es muss dahingestellt bleiben, ob und welche der nachfolgenden Gebete Alkuin angehören. Ihr Inhalt erregt an sich kein Bedenken; Gewissheit könnte jedoch nur das handschriftliche Zeugnis geben.'

³ *Ep.* 134 [261].

various Spanish malpractices, including the substitution of single for trine immersion in baptism¹—completes the tale of Alcuin's liturgical labours.

But other tasks of a somewhat kindred nature also occupied him. The liturgy did not stand alone in its need for revision. In his correction of the corrupted Lectionary Alcuin could not but observe the deplorable condition of the biblical texts themselves. Not only were they often disfigured, like most other manuscripts of the day, by the gross blunders of incompetent scribes, but they presented a variety of readings which made exact citation for purposes of controversy or exposition almost impossible. As with the service books, so with the Scriptures, uniformity was unknown. If every great Gallican church had its own liturgical 'use,' it might almost be said that every religious community had its own Bible; even in a single house indeed texts of various types might easily be found.

Everywhere the Vulgate had emerged triumphant from its long struggle with the old Latin versions, 'Italian' or 'European,' but everywhere also it bore the marks of the conflict in many a variation from the original readings of Jerome, forced into its text by the strength of local tradition. This was the case, to a large extent, even in Italy itself; and when, by a process unrecorded and as yet untraced, the new version made its way across the Alps, and found acceptance in the Frankish kingdom, the story was repeated.

And the same phenomenon appeared not only in

¹ *Ep.* 137 [93]. Alcuin observed that he knew nothing of the letter of Gregory the Great which the Spanish clergy cited as sanctioning the custom; and he suspected, wrongly, that it was a forgery.

the Celtic Churches of the British Isles, but even in the Anglo-Saxon Church itself. Though in the fifth century the Vulgate was apparently unknown to St Patrick, Gildas both knew and used it in the sixth. It seems indeed to have been his sole authority for some portions of the Bible, though in the case of others he was evidently acquainted with both versions. And perhaps the Irish Church may have owed a Latin Bible, as well as a Latin Liturgy, to her 'Second Order of Saints,' and through them to the Schools of Wales. The Vulgate at least plays a part in some versions of the legend of Columcille and St Finnian's Psalter¹; and the writings of Adamnan, Cummin, and other Irishmen at home and abroad, show that in their day it had become the accepted text of the Irish monasteries. But the victory was won, not by the pure version of St Jerome, but by the Vulgate in a Celtic form, which betrayed in no small measure the influence of the ancient Latin texts, 'le fond commun de toute la tradition ecclésiastique de la Grande Bretagne et de l'Irlande².'

To England the Vulgate came with the Kentish mission, but it was not at once accepted to the exclusion of all other renderings. In his *Vitae Abbatum* Bede records how Ceolfrid of Wearmouth caused the scribes of Biscop's foundations to prepare, under his direction, *tres pandectas novae translationis*, one of which was deposited in each of the twin monasteries, while the third, the only one now extant in its entirety³, was

¹ The ms. is variously described as a Bible, as an Evangeliary, as a Psalter, and as a Missal: the text as old Latin and as Vulgate. Cf. Stokes, *Six Months in the Apennines*, 26.

² Berger, *Histoire de la Vulgate*, 30.

³ Possibly the Durham Fragment of St Luke, almost identical

the *Codex Amiatinus* which he was in the act of carrying to Rome when he died¹. But the *Codex*, though exhibiting in the main a Vulgate text, derived not improbably from the Neapolitan Bible which furnished the scribe of the Lindisfarne Gospels with a model, is manifestly influenced here and there by the older versions: and the passage of the *Vitae Abbatum* just quoted tells of a pandect *vetustae translationis* brought from Rome by Ceolfrid, possibly the *Codex Grandior* of Cassiodorus, an old Latin Bible which was almost certainly in Northumbria at the time, and which, as some think, lay before the scribe who wrote the *Codex Amiatinus* itself². Nor was it only through Italian manuscripts that the Anglo-Saxons came into contact with the old versions, for the Celtic mission in Northumbria, bringing with it the Vulgate in the form

with the *Codex Amiatinus* in text and script, may belong to one of the others.

¹ *Vitae Quinque Abbatum* ii., 'Ceolfridus...tres pandectas novae translationis ad unum vetustae translationis quam de Roma attulerat...super adjunxerat.' Cf. *De Temporum Ratione*, c. 66. The anonymous biographer of Ceolfrid, who was Bede's authority, is more explicit: 'tres pandectas faceret describi,' 'caused to be written.'

² It is a disputed point whether this scribe was an Italian teacher in the school at Wearmouth, as is suggested by certain orthographical peculiarities in the ms., or merely an English monk who took an Italian Bible for his model. On the one hand Corssen, in his review of Berger's work (p. 860), maintains that 'nicht nur die Schrift, sondern auch die Orthographie hat, ausser ganz schwachen Spuren, nichts angelsächsisches.' On the other it is urged that neither Bede nor the biographer of Ceolfrid mentions the presence of a foreign writing master in the monastery; that the text of the *Codex* closely resembles the Lindisfarne Gospels, which betray the *provenance* of their model by the Neapolitan Calendar prefixed to them; that there are unmistakably Northumbrian features both in the arrangement and in the text of the ms.; and that the employment of an Italian model sufficiently accounts for the peculiar orthography. Cf. Berger, *op. cit.*, 37; White, *The Codex Amiatinus and its Birth-place*, *passim*; and Clark, *The Care of Books*, 40 (the frontispiece to this last work being taken from the *Codex*).

it had assumed in Ireland, also had a share in the formation of the Anglo-Saxon textual tradition. 'La mélange des textes, tel est le trait dominant de l'histoire de la Bible dans les Îles Britanniques, de même que la mélange des rites a été le caractère de la lente conquête des Îles Britanniques par les missionnaires romains¹.'

The Anglo-Saxon scribes themselves further imparted to their manuscripts a certain distinctive national character which marked them off from other biblical texts of the period. There might be fewer remarkable readings, a stronger inclination to follow the authoritative model, than the Irish Bibles exhibited, but the peculiarities of text and form were unmistakable. 'Les copistes saxons ne savaient pas copier un texte étranger sans lui donner, pour ainsi dire, la couleur locale des textes de leur pays².'

Meanwhile the Spanish Churches had evolved a type of Vulgate influenced in a unique degree by the fourth century 'Italian' version of the heretic Priscillianus. His Canons of St Paul's Epistles were to be found—disguised but not concealed under the name or pseudonym of an orthodox 'Peregrinus Episcopus'—in most Spanish manuscripts, which were further distinguished by certain peculiarities in the arrangement of the books of the Bible, differing in different cases as the influence perhaps of the *Prologus Galateus* of Jerome, or of the old version of Cassiodorus, or of the *Preface* of Isidore of Seville, predominated³.

¹ Berger, *op. cit.*, 36.

² *Ibid.* 38.

³ *Ibid.* 26; but Corssen, *loc. cit.*, hesitates to accept in full Berger's views as to the characteristics of the Spanish Bibles.

The significance of these facts in the history of the Latin Bible was not confined to the British Isles and to Spain. In France itself the proximity of the Spanish, the missionary zeal of the Irish and Anglo-Saxon, Churches gave to their biblical traditions no small importance. The connexion between Visigothic Spain and Visigothic Gaul was always close, while scholars and missionaries from Ireland and England scattered their manuscripts broadcast over Western Europe. And so, besides the variations in the Vulgate texts imported directly from Italy, and others which arose on the Frankish soil itself, yet others were introduced into Frankish Bibles by the influence of the Churches beyond the Channel and the Pyrenees.

Irish and Anglo-Saxon manuscripts were brought to the banks of the Loire from Brittany and the British Isles, Spanish from Septimania and Spain; and, meeting in central France, the currents crossed and mingled, Spanish texts penetrating to northern libraries, Irish and Anglo-Saxon texts finding their way to the churches and monasteries of the south.

Such were the most important of the textual traditions which, at the accession of Charles the Great, were silently and confusedly struggling for supremacy in his dominions, claiming and counter-claiming the distracted allegiance of the Frankish Church. After his death a difference was discernible. In some measure, at least, order had been introduced where before all had been chaos. In many ninth century biblical manuscripts, underneath the countless surface variations which still remain, a certain unity is to be perceived, a unity imparted by the common impress of a single

influence, and that plainly the influence of a scholar. In some cases the scholar was Alcuin.

The evidence for attributing to him a revision of the Latin Bible is indeed for the most part indirect. No Capitulary can be cited as formally authorising his version, as *Cap. 30* formally authorised the Homiliary of Paulus Diaconus. Nor can any date be assigned with certainty to his work. It is by no means clear that *Cap. 30*, itself a document of doubtful date, referred to it in its assertion that by the royal order the Old and New Testaments had been carefully revised¹. Twice only do Alcuin's own letters seem to shed a little light upon the subject: once when, in the spring of 800, he mentions incidentally that he is engaged by Charles' order *in emendatione Veteris Novique Testamenti*², and again when, perhaps at Christmas in 801, he sends to the King a complete and corrected Bible³—neither letter clearly proving anything more than that he wrote for Charles one of the Bibles, at least four in number,

¹ 'Jam pridem universos veteris ac novi testamenti libros... examussum correximus.' Most authorities date the Capitulary between 786, when Paulus retired to Monte Cassino, and Christmas 800, when Charles acquired the imperial title, which does not appear in the document. Berger (*op. cit.*, 187) dates it considerably later than 789, but admits that the reference is not necessarily to Alcuin, since other scholars, *e.g.* Paulus himself, may have been employed in the same field; cf. Corssen (*Ada-Handschrift*, 31 *seqq.*), who holds that *Cap. 30* refers to Paulus' work.

² *Ep.* 195 [136].

³ *Ep.* 205 [145], 'Divinorum munera librorum, quos, in unius clarissimi corporis sanctitatem conexos atque diligenter emendatos, vestrae...auctoritati...dirigere curavi.' Duemmmler identifies the ms. with the Trier Evangeliary: Corssen and Berger, probably rightly, insist that the words point to a complete Bible, and prefer the date given above to Duemmmler's 798-803; Berger (*op. cit.*, 190) maintaining, as against Corssen, that the two letters refer to the same work, and that 'nous possédons dans nos textes le point de départ et le point d'arrivée du travail d'Alcuin, la commande royale, avant l'an 800, et la présentation à l'empereur, à Noël 801, de l'exemplaire achevé.'

which are shown by his dedicatory poems to have been prepared under his supervision¹. Yet there seems no sufficient reason for rejecting the tradition that the Carolingian revision of the Latin Bible was in part his work. The primary object of the revision was no doubt the creation of a model for the guidance of future copyists, by the removal of the gross blunders which defaced nearly every manuscript of the Merovingian age. But the reviser could not confine himself to the simple correction of grammatical blunders or slips of the pen. He was constantly confronted with the necessity for the deliberate formation of a text, for the rejection of one or another of two or more rival readings, each of which could claim perhaps no small manuscript authority. For uniformity, as well as grammatical correctness, so far as it was attainable, was of necessity included, so to speak, in the terms of his commission. In such circumstances, at a time when the critical sense was as yet hardly existent, his choice was inevitably determined in large measure by the traditions of his birth and training. But it has been regarded as not the least of the arguments in favour of Alcuin's claim to a share in the Carolingian revision that in the 'Alcuinian' Bibles tradition, perhaps indeed the tradition of the Anglo-Saxon Church², rather than his

¹ Berger (195) places all four in 799-801.

² So Berger (cf. *op. cit.*, ix.); but Corssen in reviewing his work (*loc. cit.*, 872) asserts that Alcuin based his recension primarily not on Northumbrian but on Italian mss., which, though the Northumbrian mss. were also in a sense Italian, were essentially different. These writers are also at issue as to the degree of importance which Alcuin's work possesses. To Berger it is an official undertaking, authorised, even commanded, by Charles; and Alcuin stands alone, in respect of it, among the scholars of his day: 'il a été le dépositaire de la pensée de son maître': 'son œuvre est la seule qui se soit inspirée

own independent judgment, is so clearly shown to have been the guiding light of the reviser.

No Bible, indeed, written either by Alcuin himself, or under his personal supervision, can now be shown. Experts are not agreed even on the question which of the biblical manuscripts of the ninth century still extant approximates most nearly to the original 'Alcuinian' pattern¹. Nor is a uniform text to be found in the group of manuscripts known as the 'Tours Bibles,' which undoubtedly represent a stage in the subsequent history of his version. In externals, indeed, the group is clearly defined by uniformity in the order of the books, the character of the 'prefaces,' and the like. And even important textual 'interpolations' are absent, or on rare occasions present, in all the manuscripts alike, so that to this extent it is justifiable to speak of a 'Tours text' or a permanent 'Alcuinian tradition.' But, for the rest, the text, 'respectable, indeed, but mediocre and characterless—such a text as might be expected to result from the labours of many copyists, and yet more correctors²'—presents endless and purposeless variation in detail. Perhaps, as M. Berger has suggested, this may have been due in part to the practice of selling or

d'un esprit véritablement nouveau.' Corssen (*Bericht über die lateinischen Bibelübersetzungen*, 59) recognises the existence of an Alcuinian revision made at Tours, but insists on its unofficial character, and on the fact that it was only one of the new editions of the Vulgate text which were issuing simultaneously from various sources.

¹ Here again Corssen differs from Berger, rejecting the claim which he asserts for the *Codex Vallicellianus*, and denying his assertion that the *Codex* may have been copied in part from one of Alcuin's own Bibles, and that it presents a striking likeness to the text from which Alcuin himself habitually quoted. The Bibles of Zürich and Bamberg and the Gospels of Adalbold, in Corssen's view, most nearly represent the original Alcuinian version.

² Berger, *op. cit.*, xii.

giving away new Bibles as soon as they were written, and retaining as models for the copyists only old books without market value, Bibles which were not really 'Alcuinian,' possibly, at all, but were merely brought into greater or less conformity with Alcuin's text by marginal corrections. Perhaps, again, as Dr Corssen surmises, even the Bibles prepared under Alcuin's own direction were not in all respects identical. Whatever the cause, the corruption of the original went on apace, and proved to demonstration the impossibility of establishing or maintaining a single authoritative biblical text.

Yet the efforts of Alcuin and his fellow-labourers were not wholly fruitless. If Charles, indeed, ever dreamed of attaining in this department such a uniformity as he achieved in liturgical matters by his adoption and adaptation of the Gregorian Sacramentary, his dreams were vain. But something was accomplished; the finishing touch was put to the triumph of the Vulgate, the results of Merovingian ignorance were swept away, and, in some slight degree at least, even the cause of uniformity was advanced; for the countless details which distinguished one Alcuinian Bible from another were, after all, only details—the external differences which distinguish the individual members of a numerous family, rather than the essential dissimilarities which divide the nations.

Another Carolingian scholar—more gifted, perhaps, certainly more original, than Alcuin—the Visigothic Theodulph of Orleans, also formed a revised text of the Vulgate, and displayed no little skill and judgment in the performance. The contrast between the characters

and fates of the two productions is both curious and significant.

Alcuin, obeying the mandate of another, attempted, it would seem, as part of a comprehensive scheme of political and ecclesiastical reform, to establish a single authoritative text which should secure a high degree of uniformity in the Bibles of the future.

Theodulph, executing a plan which he himself conceived, and actuated apparently by motives of literary interest alone, collected and collated a vast variety of readings in a critical apparatus which recorded the variations in the Bibles of the past.

Of Alcuin's original manuscripts not one can now be shown, and many of the characteristics of his version were speedily obscured by the corrupting carelessness of copyists.

The work of Theodulph, on the other hand, remains to this day enshrined, complete and uncorrupted, in the *Codex Memmianus*, a sumptuous monument alike of learned industry and of artistic skill¹.

But the interest attaching to the Bibles of Theodulph quickly became, and has ever since remained, almost entirely antiquarian, while the Alcuinian version—corrupted, indeed, almost out of knowledge, yet never wholly losing its identity—lived on through the ceaseless changes of many centuries, and, in the modern recension of the Vulgate, is living still.

¹ Cf. Delisle, *Les Bibles de Theodulfe*; Corssen, *Bericht über die lateinischen Bibelübersetzungen*, 60; and Berger, *op. cit.*, 145–176. The 'Bible of Puy,' in other respects almost the counterpart of the *Codex Memmianus*, is a remarkable example of the ignorance compatible with artistic skill. The ms. itself is a beautiful production, but the text with matchless infelicity interchanges and confounds true readings, variants, and marginal corrections.

The biblical and liturgical labours of Alcuin are the last that his biographer has to describe, and with this brief account of them the story of the Northumbrian scholar may fitly close.

The record of his life is the record of the working of a perfect instrument. Loyalty was perhaps his most striking characteristic.

He was loyal to the teaching of his masters and the traditions of the past. For his tranquil conservatism, undisturbed by self-questionings or misgivings, the old paths were always best, and precedent an all-sufficient guide.

He was loyal to the Church: even to the point of concealing her weaknesses, to the best of his ability, from all but sympathetic eyes.

He was loyal to Charles: reverencing the grandeur of his character, delighting in his friendship, rejoicing to interpret and fulfil his every wish.

He was loyal above all to his religion: sparing neither time nor trouble in his zealous defence of its fundamental doctrines, pointing out even to the great king the mischief he was doing by his attempt to force it on the conquered Saxons, warning his pupils against those breaches of its moral precepts which degraded the royal court itself.

For the rest, he was pure and devout, patient and constant, kindly and humble-minded. Ambition and avarice were foreign to his nature. To the last he was content to remain a *humilis Levita*; the posts of honour which he filled were almost thrust upon him; and the taunts hurled by Elipandus at 'the master of twenty thousand serfs' were not more keenly felt than they were undeserved.

His industry was indefatigable; indolence and idleness he held in detestation; he never spared or indulged himself¹; and against luxury and extravagance he was never weary of inveighing. Yet he was no mere gloomy ascetic: his letters and still more his poems reveal a deep and sympathetic love of nature, and a keen delight in all her varied beauties.

His passionate attachment to Arno and his reverential devotion to Charles sufficiently prove how capable he was alike of deep and faithful affection and of generous admiration for men greater than himself; while the eager interest he displayed in the fortunes and pursuits of all his pupils shows how boundless was his sympathy with his inferiors.

He had indeed the defects of his good qualities. He was lacking in physical courage; he knew nothing of the adventurous spirit of the pioneer; he was totally destitute of originality. He clung timidly to the beaten track, and never in any respect advanced beyond his age². His political instinct was overpowered by the strength of his ecclesiastical bias, and perhaps in his temper as in his manner there was not a little of the pedagogue³.

Nor were his virtues heroic. His career does not challenge comparison with the strenuous devoted lives of Columcille and Boniface; it is even doubtful whether

¹ Wine, says his biographer, he used only as medicine.

² His position on the Saxon question is a doubtful exception.

³ Notker wrote to his pupil Salomo: 'Epistolas vero ejus (Alcuini) tibi commendare non audeo, qua tibi puerulo cum supercilio scriptae videntur. Sed ego non ita sentio quia ille juxta auctoritatem suam, qua omnes post regem potentissimum praecebat et locutus est et vixit et scripsit.' Duemmler, *Formelbuch des Bischofs Salomo von Konstanz*, 72, quoted by Masius, *op. cit.*, 174.

he ever embraced the full rigour of monasticism. But it is easy to belittle his importance overmuch, and perhaps not a few with greater powers of mind and body, and characters cast in a more heroic mould, have done less for their own age and for posterity than he. For through a long and laborious life, though greatly hampered by weakness and ill-health, he remained faithful to ideals unpretentious, doubtless, but not unfruitful, hoarding up for the instruction and edification of future scholars the accumulated wisdom of the past, and fighting error in ritual and doctrine with the weapons of authority and precedent.

He created nothing, he originated nothing, he added nothing to what had gone before. Yet so important, in that epoch, was the work of mere conservation, so imperative the need for it, so faithful his performance of the task, that if, as he himself loved to say, the learning of preceding ages was his heritage, the learning of the ages which followed may justly be accounted his memorial.

* * * * *

Someone once described the career of Bede as 'a phenomenon easier to praise than to parallel.' The career of Alcuin, intellectually his heir, and in some sense his disciple, does however in many respects present a parallel, striking though imperfect. It has been truly said that Bede, Egbert, Ælbert, and Alcuin 'appear to have exhibited with singular uniformity the main characteristics of the Anglo-Saxon mind¹.' And the likeness between Bede and Alcuin is specially remarkable.

¹ Mullinger, *op. cit.*, 58.

The biblical commentaries of Bede, his allegorical expositions, his lives of the Saints, his treatises on astronomical and other subjects, find their counterpart in Alcuin's writings. Bede moreover is often Alcuin's authority; his treatises were 'the manuals of Alcuin's school,' and the Gregorian tradition was cherished with a passionate devotion by both alike.

Their methods, too, were very similar. Both were fondly addicted to far-fetched analogies and hidden parallels, and delighted to draw out with a wealth of mystical interpretation the 'threefold meaning' of Scripture. And both devoted much time and labour to the task of presenting afresh the thoughts, often even the very words, of earlier writers. Bede collected all the utterances of Augustine on the subject of St Paul. Alcuin constructed his commentary on St John out of extracts from Augustine, Ambrose, Gregory, and Bede himself. Of one as well as of the other it may be said that 'most of his works are studious epitomes of great learning, of little originality, but all suffused with his gentleness and brightness¹,'—that 'original work must not be looked for in a man preeminently a teacher, not a thinker²,'—and that he 'was not a man to create philosophy anew,' but, 'having before him abundant stores of knowledge, as he esteemed them, he did not care to speculate,' finding in the Scriptures an inexhaustible study, and in grammar, 'the knowledge of the Word,' a subject half divine³. The fortunes of the two men differed widely. One passed his life in the un-

¹ Stopford Brooke, *English Literature*, 117.

² Pearson, *History of England*, i. 302.

³ *Ibid.* 303.

troubled quiet of his Jarrow home. The other was 'Minister of Education' to the greatest king in Europe, his confidant in affairs ecclesiastical and academic, the trusty agent who interpreted and carried out his wishes when but for him they would have failed alike of expression and of execution. But both were Christian scholars of an essentially English type, humble though learned, kindly, generous, and patient, permeated and at times oppressed by an overwhelming sense of the holiness of God, and of their own sinfulness and weakness. Both devoted themselves to the twofold task of gathering knowledge and imparting it to others; whether in the words of older teachers or in a form more suited to their own days, and both, dying, left the world the wiser and the better for their lives. One precept, a precept constantly on Alcuin's lips, may stand for the motto of both their lives: 'Learn thyself, that thou mayest have that which thou canst teach withal!'

APPENDIX I.

WAS ALCUIN A MONK?

THE question whether, during the greater part of his life¹, Alcuin was a canon or a monk has been hotly disputed: Mabillon and Froben, and in recent times Hauck, arguing strongly for his monastic character, Stubbs asserting that 'the matter would hardly have been so long debated without the spur of monastic zeal and jealousy,' and maintaining, as Pueckert has done, that his life at Tours was inconsistent with the rigour of monasticism, even at a time when that rigour was so far relaxed as to permit a layman to be abbot.

Much has been made of three passages in the anonymous *Vita Alcuini*, which run as follows:

(i) *O vere monachum monachi sine voto, cujus exempli sequax perraro invenitur monachus ex debito!* (c. 5).

(ii) *Vita denique ejus monasticae non inferior fuit* (c. 11).

(iii) *Illorum vestigia sequantur quos... Christo placuisse certissime probarunt, Benedicti scilicet monachis et Alcuini per omnia canonicis imitatione digna.* (Prologus.)

Of these the first, referring to a period in Alcuin's career when he must have been unprofessed in any case, may be dismissed at once as irrelevant.

¹ Stubbs, *D.C.B.*, suggests that he *may* have been tonsured in preparation for death.

The second, which describes his life at St Martin's after he had delegated his secular duties to his assistants, has been interpreted to mean either

(a) that though himself only a canon he lived like a monk ;

or (b) that while his 'subjects' observed a laxer rule he himself embraced the full rigour of monastic life.

The first view seems the more plausible, but leaves it open to assume, as Froben and Hauck have done, that the biographer was mistaken, being misled by the fact that the inmates of St Martin's were canons pure and simple under Fredegis into concluding that the same must have been the case under Alcuin, which *Ep.* 247 disproves.

The third passage, however, seems to set it beyond all question that, at least in his biographer's eyes, Alcuin was a model canon and nothing more, though his life, at any rate towards its close, was even monastic in its severity.

Since, however, the biographer may have been misled in the manner indicated, it is impossible to accept his testimony as conclusive, and other sources of evidence perhaps tend on the whole to weaken its force.

It has been noted that, though Charles and others called him Abbot, he never used the title himself, and never spoke of himself as a monk, but only as a deacon, *humilis Levita*, but this seems to have been a not uncommon practice, and by no means precludes the possibility that he was really a monk. And in other ways he does seem to refer to himself as a son of St Benedict and a brother of Benedictines¹, displaying an intense devotion to the memory of the Saint² and a zeal for monasticism which in itself is

¹ Hauck cites *Ep.* 97 [54].

² *Carm.* li. 8 and xc. 23 : they prove little, and the argument based by Mabillon on the forms of confession seems also very weak.

almost monastic¹. And in his letters to the brethren at York, in which he urges on them the *regularis vitae... disciplina*², which means apparently the Benedictine rule³, he seems to regard himself also as bound to keep it⁴. On the other hand it is urged by Stubbs and Pueckert that his apparent possession of a separate income as well as a separate dwelling at St Martin's, and his observance of the night hours on fast days only—a laxity which in regular monks he rebuked⁵—are facts which it is hard to reconcile with a monastic profession. But Hauck replies that a strict observance of the Benedictine rule was not essentially to make a monastery Benedictine⁶. The position of St

¹ Stubbs, however, holds that he admired monasticism only as 'an ideal to which he felt himself too busy or too worldly to aspire till he grew too old.'

² *Epp.* 42 [34], 43 [35].

³ Hauck, ii. 125, n. 1, citing *Ep.* 19 [27].

⁴ Cf. *Ep.* 42 [34], 'beati patres, praedecessores nostri.' Mabillon makes much of the monastic character of St Mary's at York, where Alcuin was *scholasticus* and librarian—'a rare position for a secular clerk if any monk was qualified'—citing in proof Bede's Letter to Egbert (referring to the Church as a 'monastery'), the *Vita Liudgeri* (*Vit.* i. (c. 12) says Liudger, on his return from York, was *in monasticis eruditionibus inlustrior*; *Vit.* ii. (c. 6) speaks of Alcuin as teaching him for three years *in monachorum monasterio*; and *Vit.* iii. (c. 8) describes Liudger as *honorabilis monachis ibi consistentibus*, and declares (c. 9) that he *monachorum qui in eo loco erant perfecte didicerat vitam*), and Alcuin's own poem *de SS. Eboracensibus* (where Wilfrid II. is called *Vice-dominus et Abbas*, l. 1217, and Ælbert is said to have been *in monasterio*, l. 1445: cf. ll. 1523 and 1565). Froben adds that *Ep.* 209 [149] shows that Calvinus was at once a member of the Church of York who shared in the election of the Archbishop and a professed monk at the *cella S. Stephani*. On the other hand, Stubbs maintains that 'York was certainly not monastic or Benedictine in such a sense as to exclude secular clergy who were members of the Archbishop's court and household; it was most probably a mixed society, necessarily containing clerks, incidentally containing monks.' On this view the mere fact that Alcuin was brought up at York would tell neither way.

⁵ Pueckert. The citation of *Ep.* 131 [154] seems irrelevant.

⁶ He holds that *Ep.* 97 [54] indicates a wish on Alcuin's part to fulfil his monastic vow by securing some *stabilitas loci*, which he afterwards found at Tours.

Martin's when Alcuin became its abbot was notoriously ambiguous: *Ipsi quippe nostis*, Charles wrote to the monks on the occasion of their quarrel with the Archbishop of Orleans, *qui congregatio hujus monasterii ac servi Dei, et utinam veri, dicimini, qualiter jam crebro vita vestra a multis diffamata est; et non absque re. Aliquando enim monachos, aliquando canonicos, aliquando neutrum vos esse dicebatis.* And he added that, to restore discipline and set the abbey in order (a task, observes Mabillon, never entrusted to a secular abbot), he had put over them Alcuin, *rectorem idoneum, ... qui et verbis et admonitionibus vos rectam vitam instruere, et, quia religiosus erat, bonae conversationis exemplo potuisset informare*¹. It would be rash, perhaps, in view of these conflicting theories, to assert any definite opinion on the matter. But the question is rendered less important, if at the same time more difficult, by the fact that the line between monk and canon was not an absolutely hard and fast one. So, in spite of his strenuous assertion of Alcuin's monastic character, Hauck admits: 'Eine strenge Unterscheidung zwischen Klöstern und Stiftern scheint mir für diese Zeit undurchführbar. Einerseits sind die Nachrichten zu dürftig und der Sprach zu verschwommen; *monasterium* kann sowohl Kloster als Stift bedeuten, als *fratres* bezeichnen sich sowohl die Kanoniker als die Mönche'². Andererseits war die Grenze thatsächlich fließend. Alcuin spricht neben *canonici* und *monachi* von dem *tertius gradus qui inter hos duos variatur, superiori gradu canonicis, et inferiori monachis stantes, die nec spernendi sunt, quia tales maxime in domo Dei inveniuntur.* *Ep.* 258 [192].'

¹ *Ep.* 247 [182]. The word *religiosus* is possibly of some importance. In *Ep.* 54 [268] Alcuin commends the *religiosa conversatio* of a certain Abbot Arnulf and his monks. Cf. Hauck: *loc. cit.*

² ii. 431, n. 3.

APPENDIX II.

THE 'PUERI AEGYPTIACI.'

THE whole subject of the *pueri Aegyptiaci* and their calculations is exceedingly perplexed and obscure. The critical passage runs as follows :

'Unde miror cur pueri vestri annum legitimum a mense Septembrio incipere velint et partem transacti decennovennalis sequenti connectere circulo, caudam vertentes in caput ; et non magis, omnibus lunae et siderum augmentis vel detrimentis explosis, ad novum annum et ad caput supervenientis circuli omnino libere intrare. Libet tamen interrogare hos ipsos pueros : an convenientius videatur anni aetates lunares pro regularibus habere et hoc primi anni, vel etiam duorum annorum, id est novissimi circuli decennovennalis et primi sequentis ? Et utrum rationi vicinius sit in fine circuli decennovennalis saltum inserere vel in medio quolibet anno ? Etiam et hoc velim scire, quomodo computare velint aetates lunares a quinto decimo Kalendas Maias, ubi quarta decima luna novissima anni fuit, usque ad Septembrium mensem, in quo mense quinta apud Aegyptiacos pueros cantatur ? Quomodo fieri possit, ut altera luna semper habeat triginta dies, altera undetriginta ? Et si regulares per omnia illis mensibus firmiter stare valeant. Et, ut reor, quod in Novembrio nolunt fieri, necesse est in alio quolibet mense invenire.' *Ep.* 145 [98].

The *pueri Aegyptiaci*, whoever they may have been, apparently dated the year from August 29 in the Egyptian style, thus, in Alcuin's view, turning the tail (i.e. the last three months of the 19-year cycle, September--December

797) into the head ; and perhaps they would have wished to place the *saltus* in some other year of the cycle, as was done by Anatolius or Victorius (Bede, *De Temporum Ratione*, XLII.). Alcuin, however, replied that, on their own showing, since they admitted that April 17, 797, was *lunae xiv*, and that September 1, 797, was *lunae v*, they must as a matter of fact have made a *saltus lunae* themselves between these dates ; as indeed (though Alcuin did not quote him) Bede expressly declared the Egyptians did, viz. in July, i.e. the penultimate month of the nineteenth year of their cycle (*Op. cit.* xx. On this and other relevant passages in Bede, cf. Sickel, *Die Lunarbuchstaben*). What the result of these arguments was does not appear. The *pueri Aegyptiaci* are mentioned again as criticising some of Alcuin's calculations, but in another connection : the only reference to the *saltus lunae* being an acknowledgment by Alcuin of some slip of the pen, in *priore cartula nostra de saltus supputatione*, due to the carelessness of his amanuensis, which Charles had pointed out (*Ep.* 149 [100]). The treatise he sent to the king with *Ep.* 145 [98] is the *De Cursu et Saltu Lunae*, printed among his didactic works (Migne, *Patrol. Lat.* ci. 979-993), which describes the position assigned to the *saltus* by Victorius (Bede, *De Temp. Rat.* XLII. seems to show that he is here mistaken : cf. Bucherius, *De Doctrina Temporum*, 145-151 : the explanation given by Ideler, *Handbuch d. math. u. techn. Chronologie*, II. 280, can scarcely be reconciled with Bede's account) and Dionysius, and then proceeds to exhibit a variety of ingenious ways in which the fractions of the day omitted can be assigned to the nineteen years of the cycle. 'Hoc vero,' says an early editor, 'vel calculi variandi gratia, vel—quod magis arridet—docendi causa fecisse censendus est !'

The whole question is of little intrinsic importance, and

would scarcely demand discussion if a somewhat groundless surmise of Mabillon had not based on it a theory that Alcuin was antagonistic to Irish scholars, an assumption which seems to lack foundation.

'Quinam fuerint Aegyptiaci illi praeceptores, conijcere mihi videor ex carmine Theodulfi Aurelianensis episcopi ad Angilbertum : quo in carmine Scottum quendam in aula degentem ac docentem falsis amarulentisque dicteriis impetit. Nam Scotti ex Hibernia orti olim sequebantur Paschalem circulum Alexandrinorum, qui Pascha lunae quarta decima die, si quando in Dominicam incidisset, celebrabant. Et forsan is erat Clemens Scottus, quem in Gallia ad docendum fuisse relictum a Carolo tradit monachus Sanct-Gallensis initio primi libri.'

So far Mabillon. The hypothesis becomes a fact with some of Alcuin's French and English biographers. (Stubbs in *D.C.B.*, Adamson in *D.N.B.*, and the German writers generally, seem to ignore Mabillon's suggestion.) Thus Monnier, *Alcuin et son influence littéraire*, 1853, p. 95 :

'Le roi Charles hésita longtemps avant de nommer un maître dans l'école palatine. Son goût pour l'astronomie était plus vif que jamais : cette science était la seule qu'il n'eut pas épuisé avec Alcuin. Il avait entendu parler des luttes des Anglo-Saxons et des Irlandais. Ceux-ci avaient bien approfondi les merveilleux secrets qu'il désirait connaître ; leurs conclusions étaient opposées à celles d'Alcuin ; enfin ils connaissaient très-bien les langues anciennes. Mais quel chagrin profond il allait causer à son maître ! Quelle récompense pour tant de dévouement, et quel retour pour une si tendre amitié ! À la fin, son goût l'emporta : il fit venir des Irlandais, et se mit aussitôt à travailler avec eux. La manière orientale de calculer la Pâque et toutes les doctrines hiberniques triomphèrent à la cour. Quelle ne fut pas la surprise du savant Anglo-Saxon, quand il sut que son successeur était Clément d'Irlande !'

So too Mullinger, *op. cit.*, 121 f. (after discussing the differences between the Irish and the Anglo-Saxons) : 'We

can hardly be surprised that the news of the installation of Clement proved a severe shock to his mental tranquillity..... It is evident, indeed, that he was deeply pained, and, in fact, the intelligence must have been heard with something like consternation by every supporter of orthodoxy in Gaul. It sent a shudder through Benedict in his cell on the distant Aniane; it startled even the astute Theodulfus in his episcopal palace at Aachen.' Poole (*op. cit.*, 23) refers to 'transient jealousies' between Alcuin and the Scots; Drane, *op. cit.*, 141, observes: 'This' (the nickname Aegyptiacus) 'was a double hit at the gibberish of the twelve Latinities, which Alcuin could not abide, and at the hankering which the Irish professors always displayed, both in science and theology, for the teaching of the school of Alexandria, many of them having embraced the peculiar views of the Neo-Platonists'; and West, *op. cit.*, 81 ff., goes even further: 'New teachers were appearing at the palace, ...Irish scholars, who inculcated among other things a mode of calculating Easter different from the tradition of Rome, and akin to that followed in the eastern Church.... Alcuin wrote again and again to Charles [there is only one letter in reply to the 'Egyptian' critics], arguing for the Roman method of calculating Easter and lamenting that such "Egyptian" teachings should have drifted in to blind the youth at the palace. Theodulf also wrote a satirical poem, setting forth the utter perverseness and worthlessness of the self-confident *Scotellus* or Irish scholar. Charles, however, viewed the situation more cheerfully, and sought to draw Alcuin into debate with the *Scotelli*, perhaps hoping for no small enjoyment from witnessing the contest. [The reference is to the invitation in *Ep.* 144 [97], and the ascription of the motive is quite gratuitous.]...Alcuin does not conceal his annoyance or his surprise that such foolish teachings should have been given any audience.

As for himself, he says, "These silly little questions beset my ears like the insects that swarm at the windows in summer" [This is Alcuin's description, in *Ep.* 143 [96], of his pupils' questions as to Septuagesima, etc., *before* he ever heard of the *pueri Aegyptiaci* !], and therefore he expresses great surprise that Charles should have listened to them, and exhorts him to summon to his side able defenders of the faith, lest this latest heresy spread to the distraction of the Church and his own kingdom.' [This, again, comes from *Ep.* 148 [99], which never mentions the *pueri*, and it refers to the Adoptionist heresy¹ !]

It is quite uncertain when Clement began to teach at Aachen, whether Theodulph's poem refers to him, and when it was written. There is moreover no trace whatever in Alcuin's other writings of any antagonism to Irishmen or to their teaching ; certainly the biographer, with his anecdote of the *Scotti vel Britones* who flocked to Tours, knew of none ; and it is incredible that, if the point at issue had been the old contest decided at Whitby, Alcuin should not have even referred to the fact. The first dispute evidently turned on the proper date for beginning the civil year, August 29 or January 1 ; the *pueri* holding a brief for the first, Alcuin for the second. Then came the proper date for the *saltus*, Alcuin deciding for November, contrary to Bede's favourite scheme (*De Temporum Ratione*), and arguing that his opponents (whose own contention does not appear) must, on the true Alexandrian reckoning, place it in July, the corresponding month in the Egyptian year. He assumes, apparently without contradiction, that they accept both April 17, 797, and April 5, 798, as the true *lunae xiv* ; nor

¹ Picavet (*op. cit.*, 276) makes the Greek whose views on the Atonement Alcuin combated in *Ep.* 307 [240], 'un des nouveaux maîtres venus d'Irlande': Monnier expressly identifies him with Clement, 'à qui Charlemagne donne le titre de sage grec.'

is there any indication that he regarded their theory as fatal to the orthodox calculation of Easter. If he had done so such a stout champion of the Roman tradition, however constitutionally complaisant, could hardly have brought himself to conclude his arguments with the Pauline *Unusquisque suo sensu abundet*. Who the *pueri Aegyptiaci* were, however, and what they really wanted, must apparently, as the Germans say, 'dahingestellt bleiben,' unless Charles' own letters on the subject are ever discovered.

APPENDIX III.

THE DATE OF THE SYNOD OF AACHEN.

DID the Synod of Aachen take place in 799 or 800? The question is full of difficulties. The earlier date was indeed at one time almost universally accepted¹; but Jaffé in his *Monumenta Alcuiniana*, relying on Alcuin's own statement that the Synod was held in the thirty-second year of Charles the Great², i.e., strictly speaking, between October 9, 799, and October 8, 800, adopted instead 800, at some time between June 4, when Liutgarde died at Tours, and June 26, when (in the year of the Synod) Alcuin reported its result to Arno³; and his view has received the support of Sickel, Hauck⁴, and Duemmler⁵. But it has been attacked on many grounds, Groessler⁶ especially arraying against it a long series of objections, not all of them however of equal weight.

¹ Hefele (*Conciliengeschichte*, iii. 722) gives the date as 798 on the authority of a somewhat inaccessible dissertation by J. Nicolai, but Hauck seems justified in rejecting this as quite impossible.

² *Adv. Elip.* i. 16.

³ *Ep.* 207 [147].

⁴ In his second edition.

⁵ In his edition of the *Epistolae*: in his *Alcuinstudien* he defended the earlier date: his change of front is thus explained (in *M.G.H. Epp.* iv. 344, n. 8): 'Ad hanc Jaffei opinionem admodum dubiam tandem Sickelio monente redii, quanquam multa sunt quae ...disputationem illam jam anno 799 factam esse mihi persuadeant. In re tam incerta annum regiminis Caroli sequi magis placuit.'

⁶ *Die Ausrottung des Adoptionismus in Reiche Karls des Grossen.*

The question is the more complicated because no two authorities are completely in agreement as to the treatises referred to by Alcuin in *Ep.* 171 [111] and *Ep.* 207 [147] respectively.

Jaffé assigns *Ep.* 171 to the *Libri VII adv. Felicem*, and adds the following note: 'Miserat Felix...libellum ad Alcuinum anno 798 (cf. *Ep.* 148 [99], 149 [100]) idque factum esse priore anno ante sui adv. Felicem libelli editionem testis est Alcuinus in *Ep.* 207 [147]. Ex quo efficitur hunc Alcuini libellum anno 799 editum esse, quae res etiam et hac *Ep.* 171 et *Ep.* 172 [112] probatur.' But when he comes to *Ep.* 207 he (or his editor; the note is not initialled) assigns the reference there to *Liber Albini*.

Duemmmler assigns both letters to the *Liber Albini*, but with this exception retains Jaffé's note to *Ep.* 171.

Hauck follows Jaffé in referring *Ep.* 171 to *Libri VII*, but only to the first book of the seven; *Ep.* 207, in agreement with both Jaffé and Duemmmler, he refers to the smaller treatise.

Groessler, on the other hand, refers both letters to the *Libri VII*, and, accepting Jaffé's note to *Ep.* 171, argues that he must therefore admit that the Council was held in 799, since *Ep.* 202 [142] shows that the *Libri VII* were not published till it was over.

Of these various views Groessler's would seem to have the most in its favour, for *Ep.* 160 (which was unknown to Jaffé) shows that the *Liber Albini* was complete, and in the hands of Alcuin's friends, at a time when the arrival of Felix's own treatise was still recent.

Moreover in *Ep.* 207 Alcuin expressly says that the treatise with which he has armed the commissioners is that 'quem nuper edidimus contra libellum illius Felicis, quem priore anno nobis direxit.' And this tallies exactly with the *Libri VII*, which were an answer to Felix's work, but

not with the *Liber Albini*, which was already in hand when that work arrived, and was intended to counteract the influence of an earlier *Epistola* of Felix, possibly addressed to Elipandus¹. Taking the *Libri VII*, then, to be the book referred to in *Ep.* 207, what interpretation is to be placed on the words 'priore anno'? Hauck (referring it to the *Liber Albini* and arguing for placing that work in 798) urges that it means not 'last year,' but 'the year before the issue of Alcuin's work.' In either case, however, if *Liber Albini* and the arrival of Felix's *libellus* are rightly dated 798 (which there seems no reason to doubt) and the *Libri VII* are referred to in *Ep.* 207, the letter itself, and consequently the Synod of Aachen of which it speaks, must probably be dated 799, the composition of the treatise being described as 'recent.' Only if the words are translated 'in an earlier year' can the date 800 be satisfactorily defended. The *Libri VII*, too, were drafted apparently as early as the winter of 798-9, and returned by Charles for revision in the spring of 799, and there seems no reason for assuming a whole year's delay before their final publication.

Again, while Alcuin may easily have spoken roughly of 799 as a whole as 'the 32nd year of Charles the Great,' he does expressly assert that Elipandus wrote *Ep.* 182 [122] (which he enclosed to Felix, as all agree, on October 23, 799) when he believed Felix to be still an Adoptionist, the inference being that at the time (the date must have been clear to Alcuin) the recantation had in fact taken place².

¹ *Adv. Fel.* ii. 11. Cf. *supra*: p. 108, n. 1.

² This is Groessler's third argument in favour of 799. His fourth is that *Epp.* 193 [134] and 194 [135] (referring to the approaching Synod) may belong to 799 as well as to 800, since the reference to Arno's journey to Rome, on which Witto accompanied him, may be the journey of 793. He adds that Jaffé's argument that Witto's presence at Tours is decisive for 800, is disproved by *Ep.* 184 [127], which shows him to have been there in 799. But the date of this

Moreover, while the presence of Alcuin and Charles together at Aachen in May—June, 799, if not demonstrable, seems at least compatible with ascertained facts (Boehmer and Sickel placing Charles there from Christmas, 798, to at least June 13, 799; and *Ep.* 170 [110], dated by all authorities 799, some time after March 19, being written by Alcuin while travelling through the Belgic plains¹), it is only a guess of Jaffé's that in June 4—26, 800, Alcuin travelled with Charles from Tours to Aachen *viâ* Orleans and Paris and thence returned alone to the neighbourhood of Elnon². And the guess is so far improbable that it involves the assumption that Alcuin—a man of advanced years and weak health—travelled for nearly three weeks at a steady rate of well over 27 miles a day. The distance from Tours to Aachen, even as the crow flies, is some 340 miles; from Aachen to Elnon (from which on June 26, in the year of the Synod, Alcuin was four leagues distant) about 120 more. Liutgarde did not die till June 4; and, assuming that she, like her husband, was buried on the day of death, that Alcuin started with Charles next day, and remained at Aachen only for the bare six days occupied by

letter is really uncertain; Hauck places it early in 800, and if it does belong to 799 it must be later than the Synod if the Synod was held in that year. Groessler's fifth argument is that *Ep.* 164 [132], with its reference to Charles' expected visit to Tours and to Alcuin's hope of vanquishing 'the Spanish Dares,' may belong to 799 and not 800. Duemmler dates the letter 799 and the Synod 800: perhaps the dates should be reversed; but there seems to be really no connection between the two. Jaffé identified 'the Spanish Dares' with Felix; Duemmler, however, prefers Theodulph of Orleans; and even if this guess is wrong it can scarcely be Felix who '*Homerum versificantem conticescere facit.*'

¹ Groessler considers probably *after* the Synod, but perhaps it is more likely to have been before.

² Groessler's sixth argument. He adds that the disputation must have been held in the latter half of May or the earlier half of June, since none of Alcuin's letters hint at any change in the date originally fixed.

the disputation¹, and that when he received Arno's letter on the 26th he had done a full day's march, only 16 days remain for a journey of over 440 miles.

The last argument in favour of 799 is that Felix, in his recantation after the Synod, referred to his condemnation by a Council at Rome in October, 798, as having been decreed *nuper*; but the expression is too vague to have much weight².

It would be rash to assert that these considerations are decisive against the later date, but they seem at least to have so much force that the *onus probandi* may fairly be cast on those who prefer to disregard them³.

* * * * *

Froben appears to be mistaken in holding that Leidrad and his fellow-commissioners made only two journeys into Septimania—one in 799, before the Synod of Aachen, when Leidrad furnished Felix with a safe conduct for the disputation, and one after it, when Alcuin sent his treatise *Adversus Elipandum* to Spain. They seem rather to have undertaken three journeys; one, undoubtedly before the Synod, when they took Alcuin's letter to Elipandus⁴,—a second, after the Synod, when their chief weapon was his larger treatise against Felix⁵,—and a third when they took with them the four books against Elipandus⁶. Froben's

¹ Even if Simson were right in holding the discussion to have lasted not five days, but five hours (*supra*, p. 115, n. 1), the rate of travelling (over 440 miles in 21 days) would be considerable.

² In *Ep.* 207 Alcuin describes his treatise against Felix as *nuper editus*; and in *Ep.* 208 [148], acknowledging the receipt of Paulinus' *Contra Felicem Libri III*, which was apparently sent to Charles in 800, he alludes to the *quaestionibus...nuper...habitis* with Felix at Aachen.

³ If Arno's movements could be dated with precision they might throw some light upon the subject, but this is apparently impossible; Hauck (ii. 450, n. 3) makes him leave Salzburg about May, 799.

⁴ Cf. *Ep.* 201 [141].

⁵ *Ep.* 207.

⁶ *Epp.* 200 [140], 201 [141].

theory that Leidrad and Felix returned with Alcuin to Tours after the disputation, and that Leidrad remained there for some months to recruit his strength, setting out again about Easter, armed with the *Libri IV adversus Elipandum*, seems to conflict with the express assertion of *Ep.* 207 that the commissioners had gone west, while Alcuin remained in the north-east.

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